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Szövegek között

Among texts

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Among Texts

Szeged, 2009.

Among Texts

(Összehasonlító Irodalom- és kultúratudományi dolgozatok)

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Foreword

In lectures and seminars of the Department of Comparative Literature, University of Szeged the discipline of traditional comparative literature is moulding, step by step, into another one, which, originating from encounters of literary and cultural studies, harmonizes with those (mostly interpretative) "turns" that urges us teachers, graduate and postgraduate students to rethink, even to redefine borders of literature. The consequence is that, besides studies thought of as traditional, other projects earn more and more significance: the question of seeing together "popular" and "elite" culture, the confrontation of fields of culture and mentality with historical-literary processes, and in the place of the mutually illuminating investigation of literature and other arts (*wechselsellige Erhellung der Künste*) arrived the "complex confrontation" indicating the integrative aspirations of both sides: so-called filmlike nature of literary works; "narrative" approach of films. However, none of these projects leave the field of comparative literature in a sense that the textuality of analysed works remains the centre of interpretation: whether the interpretation is about social movements spreading culture, about their "culturality", or about the subcultural proceeds of new developments of technical-civilisatoric modernity. This many-layered work of experimenting new methods fundamentally determines research projects and seminars of the department; partial results of this research can be read in this volume. These studies testify that postgraduate and graduate students react and reflect challenges of the discipline; signs of crisis are reinterpreted in a way that their stimulating force may turn up. In this volume of various content you can read about those research fields that are among the prior tasks of the department, and which hopefully gain their monographic forms as dissertations.

Szeged

January 2009

István Fried

The Gaze and the Camera: How the Psychoanalytic Notion of Gaze Becomes the Camera

Miklós Ságby

In 1956 Erich H. Gombrich wrote that "no era can be compared to ours in which visual representation is so cheap, in every sense of the word. Posters, advertisements, comic and visual magazine illustrations surround us and besiege us constantly. We see the images of reality illustrated on television, in movies, on mailing stamps and food packaging."[1] The only change in the situation has been the aggravation of the "siege" of technical images due to the appearance of more modern technologies of image recording, opening up new front lines. While images had become the fundamental carriers of information in the 20th century, there also happened a considerable change in the perception of reality. That is, the technical images perfected the ways of representation to such an extent that differentiating between the original (signified) and the copy (signifier) had become problematic. In fact, in the last couple of decades one can notice the "turn of the vector of meaning," or, in other words, the questioning of the whole traditional causal perspective, the substitution of cause with reason, or, that of the model with the original. As a result of this, the image is placed in front of reality and "we experience reality as a series of pictures."[2] Or, in the words of Vilém Flusser, the technical images "[i]nstead of pre-senting the world to man, they re-present it, put themselves in place of the world, to the extent that man lives as a function of the images he has produced."[3] If we take all that into account, one might ask the question: what reasons are responsible for the "mushrooming" and accumulation of images "substituting reality"?

According to Susan Sontag "our age" does not "place images in front of reality out of perversity, but as a reaction to cognitive trends in which the notion of reality had become more and more complex."[4] Roland Barthes ascribes the popularity of 20th century (popular) myths, including the mythic stories of films, to vaguely similar causes. They make it possible for the things of the world to be seen as organizable and offer the pleasure of understanding realty perfectly "in which the signs – without any obstacles, loss of meaning or contradictions – are finally in harmony with causes."[5] It is obvious that taking such pleasure and

calmness in understanding reality can only materialize through "blindness" that doesn't take into account the questioning of traditional causal perspective.

The notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge (1910) by Rilke exhibits well *what* changes in the experience of the world people in the 20th century should *still* face. This diary-novel is filled with the comments of the last descendant of an aristocratic family whose life reached its limits: "This is a changed world. New life, full of new meanings. At the moment I have difficulties because everything is too new. Under my own circumstances, I am a beginner."[6] The main reason for him being without a home in the world and for being uncertain is the untenability of the "old" vision. Several allusions in the text refer to the fact that the writer of the comments is "learning to see" which could be interpreted as the main deed and hope of accommodation to and survival in the new world.[7] If we examine the vision of Malte Laurids Brigge being formed, then it can be characterized by a certain replacement of the perception that needs an external confirmation by an individual by a subjective practice of vision. As a result of this, the difference between the internal and the external visual feelings becomes impossible to fathom. Or, as the narrator puts it, "[t]he time has come for different kinds of interpretations, every word detaches from the other, the meaning of things dissolves like a cloud, then descends like rain. [...] On the verge of change, I am the impression."[8] The passages illustrating the importance of vision-perception through closed eyes also prove the individuation of vision. For example, "I was staring in front of me and couldn't see anything [...] All of a sudden I felt something cold and bright on my eyelids, clenched on my teary eyes, so that I don't have to see anything."[9] The author of the notebooks sets out to do no less than appropriating the perspective which, together with his life, was "destined to *one single* person."

In short, Rilke's diary-novel proves that it is the questioning of the reality content in visual perception which conditioned the world experience to become more and more uncertain. In the text, with a metonymic move, visual experience replaces the process of world interpretation. Without exaggeration we can generalize this statement, and thus we can claim that this characteristic of the novel can be well described based on Merleau-Ponty's concepts, according to which the explanation of the differences between classical and modern art lies in the fundamental differences between the different periods of vision.[10]

Becoming uncertain in the content of reality of the visual experience, against which the answer is the flood of technical images creating a high degree of illusion of objectivity, influences the way in which the subject perceives itself. One has to take this effect into account because seeing and being seen both play an important role in the construction of the subjective self-*image*. The other person's *gaze* forms and molds the subject who perceives this gaze, hence, one person becomes a mirror for the other one. According to Merleau-Ponty this relationship "exposes me to the gaze of others as a man among men or at least as a consciousness among consciousnesses."[11] The dependence of the social subject on others in the construction of its own meaning is determined to a great extent within the visual field. (Obviously, not to a full extent because verbal narratives influencing the position of the subject also play an important role in the construction of identity.[12]) Lacan says the gaze of the other is the foundation of conscience, adding that "[w]hat determines me, at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, I am a *picture*."[13]

In Samuel Beckett's *Film*, one can see the literary representation of the binding power of the internalized self-image. In the *General remarks* he foreshadows the concept of the "silent play" detailed in the main text "when all external perception – animal, human, divine – ceases, but self-perception remains. The search for non existence fails due to escaping external perception because self-perception is inescapable." The story of the impossibility of getting rid of the self-image is represented in a way that first the protagonist is divided into the internal gaze becoming external and the object of the external gaze: "in order to be able to demonstrate the protagonist in this situation [wanting to get rid of his own self-image] we need to divide him into object (O) and eye (E); the first flees, the latter chases it. It will only become clear at the end of the film that the chaser and the perceiver E is not a different person, but the I itself."[14] O annihilates the gazes and the eyes looking at him in his rooms in vain (covers the mirror, the aquarium and the bird cage; puts the "staring" dog and cat outside the room; tears apart the print with God, the Heavenly Father cold eye staring at O), because eventually E, the internal gaze becoming external corners O. Another important aspect in the text is when O, escaping his own gaze destroys the photos in the room taken of him at different ages. (Picture 7 is the best proof of this, as it portrays a man in his thirties with a black bandage – the same as O's on his left eye). O's tearing the photos apart can be interpreted as the destruction of the

metaphors of the self-image because the camera taking the pictures can be interpreted as the metaphoric signifier of the position of the Other. This way, together with the pictures, the metaphor of the gaze, (the original position of) the camera staring at O is also destroyed.

The following quotation by Lacan proves that even in this brief analysis of Beckett's text we remained close to the psychoanalytic discourse: "It is through the gaze that I enter light and it is from the gaze that I receive its effects. Hence it comes about that the gaze is the instrument through which light is embodied and through which [...] I am *photo-graphed*."[15] Undoubtedly, the camera is the metaphor of the gaze of the eternal Other and the photo is the objectified metaphor of being seen. When I am looking at a photo of me, I see it as the visible, materialized version of the mental image created by the Other. The invention and spread of photography, a tool for the objectification of identity appeared in visual perception. According to Barthes, "[h]istorically speaking, seeing ourselves (but not in a mirror) is a new experience. [...] Photography is my own appearance as another person, the separation of the identity in a cunning way. [...] The moment I feel the lens of the camera targeting me, everything changes, right away I am 'posing', I am immediately fabricating another self, another body, I become a picture in advance." But "when I discover myself in the result of the operation I see that I have Completely become a Picture, that is I died, I am Death myself; the others – the Other – deprive me of myself, objectify me crudely, hold me captive, deliver me, catalog me, and prepare me for slick traps."[16]

Based on this quotation from Barthes, it is easy to see that a photograph is a tool which can be, because of its object nature, appropriated, manipulated, and it can expose the subject of the representation or make it an object of tricks. Because of this characteristic of the photo, it can be viewed as a social "screen" which regulates, determines and controls the ways of appearance of the role of subject. In the following part, I will present briefly the theory of the timeless "screen" by Lacan and the theory analyzing the historical model of the "screen" by Kaja Silverman because these can enlarge the analysis of the medial determination of literary texts with important points of view.

In *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, Lacan explains his theory of vision based on the following three figures.[17]

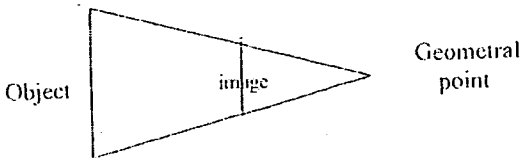

Figure 1

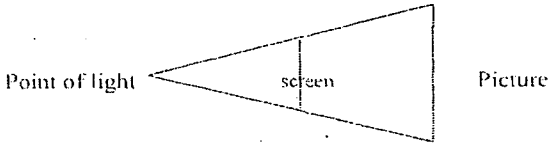

Figure 2

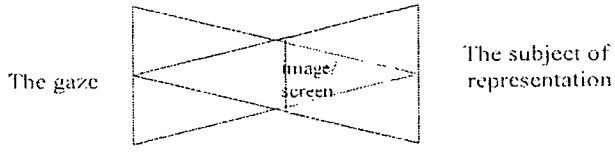

Figure 3

The first figure represents the position of the subject who is looking at an object from a location designated as the "geometral point." The geometral point in this case is a place determined by perspectival vision from which position the object is visible predictably in its own reality, according to the geometric principles discovered by Alberti. The subject is observing the world from a transcendental position, giving the subject a divine point of view, or, epistemological authority. The subject position localized in the "geometral point" is very similar to the position of the observer of the camera obscura who is also looking at a

perspectival image projected on a screen from a supra-perceptual position. Lacan, however, doesn't characterize the subject this way.[18] According to him at all times the observer can observe the "object" only through a "filter", that is, indirectly. The image visible in Figure 1 between the object and the geometral point disturbs the seeing subject's apparent certainty. What the observer sees is not directly the world of objects, but it is the way "objects reveal themselves," and hence, the image signifies this *indirectness*.

In Figure 2 the subject is marked as the picture and the gaze as the point of light. Indeed, Lacan links the gaze and the source of light, or, in other words, the gaze means the point from where light is projected on the subject, and, at the same time, it also means the presence of others as such.[19] In this respect, the subject is–as the precondition of visibility–the light, and it moves within the area of visibility. Furthermore, Lacan separates the human eye (as "geometral points") from the gaze (as "source of light"). Using Lacanian terminology, Silverman understands the role of the gaze as "the intrusion of the symbolic into the field of vision," with the help of which the social judgment of the subject takes place.[20] The creation of our own self, our meaning, and our desires are all dependant on the other – as the gaze. Existence means to be seen by others. In Figure 2, a mediating element, the "screen" can also be seen. Such a breakup in the relationship can be interpreted in a way that the subject does not become a picture independently, rather, in a way determined by the screen. The screen in this sense regulates the process of the transformation of the subject into self-image. How does the subject become an image? Referring to the quote from Lacan again what "determines me, at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside. It is through the gaze that I enter light and it is from the gaze that I receive its effects. Hence it comes about that the gaze is the instrument through which light is embodied and through which [...] I am *photographed.*"[21] The notion of "becoming a photograph" presupposes that all this is actually happening because of the camera, therefore, a new metaphor enters the system: the trope of the "camera as the gaze" (already mentioned briefly in connection with *Film* by Beckett). Even though Lacan himself does not use the word camera (he prefers using the words "instrument" or "apparatus" instead), following Silverman and the implications of the quoted extracts, I placed the camera (see Figures 2 and 3) on the side of "gaze" and "light."

In Figure 3 the first two diagrams overlap, marking that Figure 2 always limits Figure 1, because even when we are looking, we are "in the picture," or, in other words, we are the "subjects of representation." In Figure 1, the gaze takes the place of the "object," while in Figure 2 it is in the place of the "point of light." The relationship between the points or sides on the left and on the right is mediated by the double field which builds in itself the "filters" of Figures 1 and 2: "image/screen." Following Silverman, the latter, double "filter" will simply be referred to as "screen." But what does this notion mean?

Even though Lacan does not define this element of seeing, he does have a few remarks characterizing the screen. The figures above show it clearly that the screen is not inserted only between the gaze and the subject as a view, but also between the gaze and the subject as seeing, and, between this latter and the object. Consequently, it has to define how we see the gaze, the object, ourselves, that is the subject (appearing as an image). When Lacan examines the screen in connection with the subject as view, he mentions that the subject is able to manipulate the screen in order to threaten, to camouflage or to mock. He calls these functions "plays with the screen."[22] He further emphasizes that the screen is "opaque,"[23] or is not a window-like entity. But, being a mediator and linking elements, it defines their knowledge about each other.

Silverman writes a separate chapter about this problem in *The Threshold of the Visible World*, and discusses in detail the question of the screen. He argues that "the screen is the site at which social and historical difference enters the field of vision."[24] The screen defines how the gaze is comprehended in the different eras, how the world is perceived and how the subject experiences its visibility. Furthermore, this entity means the place where, for a certain society, the gaze becomes tangible, therefore, it depends on this place how the members of the society experience the effects of the gaze. Or, put differently, it operates the logic of visibility, i.e. the process through which we "figure objects and are in turn figured."[25] Silverman, reflecting on Lacan's views, emphasizes the "instrument", by which we are "photographed" and "framed". This instrument, repeatedly, is then nothing else but the camera which in this sense substitutes the screen, that is, it is the instrument through which the gaze is comprehended. According to Silverman the camera is "the imaginary source of the screen."[26] The metaphoric linkage of the gaze and the camera and the metonymic association of the camera and the screen result in the strong attachment of the subject-defining role of

visibility to the apparatuses generating technical images and the changes they went through in history.

In summary, dominant imaging procedures in a given period of time determine the creation and internalization of the self-image. Silverman stresses the current fundamental role of videos, photos and movies, adding that all these procedures can be traced back to the photographic recording technique of the camera. Even though the above list could be completed with novel digital technologies of representation, the "social screen" which regulates the self-representation of the subject was brought forth by medial techniques.

A good example for the important role the inventory of representational techniques in the analysis of literary works may play is *American psycho* (1998) by Bret Easton Ellis. The "heroes" of this novel live in a world of microphones and cameras, thus in constant digital (and analog) feedback. For them, it is impossible to separate reality from films, magazines, television and computer screens. What is more, the narrator is one of the subjects being formed ambivalently (with no personal characteristic traits) by the mainly digital (social) "screen" of the text. The receiver of the novel, therefore, together with the mimetic un-determinability of the narrator, loses definitively the points of view of referentiality as well. Or, as Péter Fodor put it, Patrick Bateman "can be seen not as a person, but rather as the meeting point of medialized roles whose constancy is not even guaranteed by the identifying function of the proper name."[27] The non-differentiability of the real one from the filmic copy is further amplified in *Glamorama* (1998) by Ellis. Everywhere and every time in the world of the novel there are film shots taking place. This becomes important as the world of backdrops and mock-ups of the settings melts together inseparably with the reality as seen by the protagonist. Sliding fiction and reality into one another erases the differentiability of the part in the movie and the subject *appearing* in that part. Consequently, however parodistically exaggerated it may be, the novel by Ellis stages the fate of the individual subjected completely to the "social screen" (television, magazines, computers, etc.). "*My* situation?" – asks Victor Ward, the protagonist roaming in the maze of technical representation. "I don't have a situation."[28] Having no situation is the result of the new world-experience which was substantially defined by the media of the techniques of representation of the end of the century. Put another way, while the tools which,

paradoxically, are striving to give an even more perfect illusion, definitively question the faith put in the reality of seeing at the same time.

If, taking a step back, we look at the line of thought exposed in the present paper, we can observe the double nature of how the camera has been interpreted. On the one hand, it is defined as the metaphor of the gaze of the Other, but on the other hand, it is defined as an *object*, developed by science with specific aims to fulfill. As I mentioned above, the place of the self-representation of the subject, or the social screen is considerably influenced by those tools which render humans visible. These apparatuses (television, magazines, computers, etc.) apparently become the source of the screen in their tangible, material reality. Oversimplifying the problem a little one may say that we do not get photographed digitally in the same way as through analog technology. Conversely, when Lacan describes the process of subjectivization as the recording of an image through the gaze of Other, then he obviously uses the camera metaphorically and does not take into consideration its physical and material nature. This idea considers the camera, at the same time, as a linguistic sign about which we can say something, and, as an object which we actually use. Or rather, using Jonathan Crary's words: the camera is the avenue "where a discursive entity is carving out material habits;" a metaphor, that is a linguistic construct, and an object, that is a "mechanical construct."[29]

To study the questions whether the double interpretation of the camera (an object and a metaphor at the same time) revealed (also) in the present paper is a mistake to correct or rather an unavoidable obligation that constantly characterizes the discourse on mediums–is way beyond the limits and obligations of the present paper.

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[1] Erich H. Gombrich: *Művészet és illúzió. (A képi ábrázolás pszichológiája)* [Art and illusion. A study in the psychology of pictorial representation]. Trad. Árpád Szabó. Gondolat, Bp., 1972: 18. When the source of the quotation is a Hungarian translation, because out the unavailability of the original, all through the paper I use my own "re-translations."

[2] Susan Sontag: *A fényképezésről* [On photography]. Trad. Anna Nemes. Európa, Bp., 1999. 200.

[3] Vilém Flusser: *A fotográfia filozófiája* [Towards a philosophy of photography]. Trad. Panka Veres and István Sebesi. Tartóshullám – Belvedre – ELTE BTK, Bp., 1990. 9. Cf. "The commonplace of modern studies of images, in fact, is that they must be understood as a kind of language; instead of providing a transparent window on the world, images are now regarded as the sort of sign that presents a deceptive appearance of naturalness and transparence concealing an opaque, distorting, arbitrary mechanism of representation, a process of ideological mystification." (In: W. J. T. Mitchell: *Iconology. Image, Text, Ideology*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1986. 8.)

[4] Sontag: *op. cit.* 200.

[5] Roland Barthes: *Mitológiák* [Mythologies]. Trad. Péter Ádám. Európa Kiadó, Bp., 1983. 25.

[6] Rainer Maria Rilke: "Malte Laurids Brigge feljegyzései [The notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge]". Trad. Gábor Görgey. In: *Válogatott prózai művek* [Selected prose]. Európa Könyvkiadó, Bp., 1990. 56.

[7] Cf. *op. cit.* 7. 16.

[8] *Op. cit.* 41.

[9] *Op. cit.* 28.

[10] Quoted by Zsolt Bagi: "Maurice Merleau-Ponty festészetelmélete [The theory of painting of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's]". In: *Passim* IV/1 (2002) 122.

[11] Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trad. Colin Smith. Routledge, London – New York, 1998. xii.

[12] Cf. "The time we live in is intertwined with stories. Family narratives designate our positions in the world before we gain consciousness, or, we could say, before we are born" (László Tengelyi: *Élettörténet és sorsesemény* [Story of life and event of fate]. Atlantisz, Bp., 1998. 13.)

[13] Jacques Lacan: *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*. Trad. Alan Sheridan. Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1994. 105-106. Emphases ours.

[14] Samuel Beckett: "Film". Trad. István Bart. In: *Samuel Beckett összes drámái* [Complete dramatic works of Samuel Beckett]. Európa Kiadó, Bp., 1998. 372.

[15] Lacan: *op. cit.* 106. Original emphases.

[16] Roland Barthes: *Világoskamra* [Camera lucida]. Trad. Magdolna Ferch. Európa Könyvkiadó, Bp., 1985. 17-20.

Sontag also talks about the objectification of the self-image in the photos in her work on photograph-theory: "we learn to see ourselves through the photographer's eyes, and if we look good in the picture we claim to be attractive." (Sontag: *A fényképezésről* [On photography]. 111.)

[17] Lacan: *op. cit.* 91. 106.

[18] Lacan proves through the analysis of *The ambassadors* by Hans Holbein (1533) that the application of the central perspective (independent of historical time) encloses the possibility of its own deconstruction, as the distorted skull at the feet of ambassadors only becomes visible from a different perspective, that is, from another perspectival order questioning at the same time the worldly authority of the figures represented from the dominant perspective: why have worldly power, if another, bigger, authority, death, can take it any moment. (*op. cit.* 88-89. 92.)

[19] *Op. cit.* 84.

[20] Kaja Silverman: *The Threshold of the Visible Word.* Routledge, New York – London, 1996. 133.

[21] Lacan: *op. cit.* 106. Emphases original.

[22] *Op. cit.* 107.

[23] *Op. cit* 96.

[24] Silverman: *op. cit.* 134.

[25] *Op. cit.* 195.

[26] *Op. cit.* 196.

[27] Péter Fodor: "Hiszem ha látom (Bret Easton Ellis: *Amerikai pszichó*) [I believe it only if I see it (Bret Easton Ellis: *American psycho*)]". In: *Az esztétikai tapasztalat medialitása* [The mediality of the esthetic experience]. Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó – Péter Szirák (eds). Ráció Kiadó, Bp., 2004. 407.

[28] Bret Easton Ellis: *Glamorama.* Picador, London, 2000. 351.

[29] Jonathan Crary: *A megfigyelő módszerei* [Techniques of the observer]. Trad. Eszter Lukács. Osiris, Bp., 1999. 46. Though Crary describes the camera obscura with these words, I still believe that because of the similarity of the problems, it allows for an interpretation referring to the 20th century camera.

A Book of Revelations (On Péter Nádas's *Own Death*)

Ferenc Nagy

...and he heard unspeakable words,
which it is not lawful for a man to utter.
(2Cor 12,4)

If you utter a word I will give you thirty blows;
if you utter not a word, just the same, thirty blows on your head.
(Toku-san zen master)

Péter Nádas's[1] volume entitled *Own Death*[2], which is structured around the author's experiences gained in the condition of clinical death, is unique in the field of the so called high literature. Of course, we could hardly find even one among the most important texts that would not strive to tackle the matter of death somehow or would not strive to tackle this very subject above all things. Nevertheless, the narrow-sense kins of the work in question fall beyond the boundaries of literature and thus beyond the domains of cognition which are legitimated as authentic and valuable in this field.

The volume consists of two parts. One is the narrative itself, telling us the story of the author's heart attack, which he suffered on 28th of April, 1993. The résumé leads the reader from the first and later more and more severe symptoms of the author's sickness through his lonely urban wandering and taking into hospital till the clinical death occurring there, and gives the detailed description of the experiences gained meanwhile, on the way to "over there". Parallel to the text, (mainly) on the left side of the volume, the author placed a photo series of 161 pictures which he took of the old wild-pear tree standing in the yard of his country house during his recovery. The photos follow the changes

of the tree and the light falling upon it from one summer to the next, mostly from the same camera position.

Particular parts of the narrative were included in a radio interview made with the author in 1997 (the interview was also broadcast in 1997, and it was published in a volume as well[3] in 2006). The oral report follows the plot of the later narrative for the most part, and some of its longer extracts are almost literally the same as their corresponding parts in the narrative. The narrative itself was first published in the Christmas issue of *Élet és irodalom* (the most important weekly of Hungarian literary public life) in 2001. This release did not contain any pictures. The work was published in a book format with photos in 2002 by the Steidl Publishers in Göttingen[4] (the author refers to this edition as a *photo album* in his biography[5]). In 2003, forty-two of the photos were also shown at an independent exhibition at the Mai Manó Gallery in Budapest (in his biography, the author mentions these photos as a photo series prepared *for* the text). The German edition was followed by the Hungarian in 2004 and later by the French, the Dutch, the Spanish and the English translations[6] (the biographical reference marks these ones as *albums*). The text was adapted to film in 2007[7]. The film also evokes the subject-matter of the pictures of the book, and it is narrated by the author himself employing the written text in its entirety.

The attempt to describe in-between existence is not only the subject-matter of the book, but the book itself is also a subject in between art forms waiting for attempts of description. The problematics of its approach is partly the consequence of its in-between position, whereas this position stems from the linguistic inapprehensibility of its subject. In the present study, focusing mainly on the text, I endeavour to outline the most important rhetorical problems of signification and interpretability and step forth towards the interpretation of the book. I am thinking about how the experience of inapprehensibility is represented in the text, how its problem gets repeated in the interpretation, and how this situation relates to the experience of the inapprehensibility of death in the referential world.

It is a well-known fact that medical practice has carried out numerous successful reanimations on patients being in the phase of death defined as clinical

one, and that death itself is more and more regarded as a process rather than a state. Even scientific research has been provided plentifully with the reports of reanimated patients for a long time. However, obviously, these reports cannot account for the secret, that is real death since they are linguistically inarticulatable and thus appear to be inaccessible for human comprehension. We do not possess structural analogy as a means of differentiation between the inapprehensibility of the ultimate secret and that of the experiences gained on the way towards Over There. (The situation cannot be improved by those approaches either that explain these reports by biochemical processes or by recalled prenatal memories, partly because they are neither trustfully justified nor generally accepted, and partly because they do not offer any fixed points for understanding the problematics of the linguistic inapprehensibility of the none the less actually encountered experiences.) Being adequate with regard to death is hopeless. So it is with regard to the reports at issue; especially coming across with them in the territory of literature.

The most bewildering peculiarity of *Own Death* is that in the most dense parts of the description, it relies on the denotative level of signification in a way that at the same time it constantly denies its very availability. Nevertheless, it makes it impossible for the interpreting mind to shift from this level. Although the work emphasizes its own literariness from the beginning, and it continuously makes us face its linguistic constructedness (more precisely, the inadequacy of it), we do not have such a (literary) point of view in which we could understand the metaphors of the near-death experiences as images, separating them from utterances meant to be literal, from the metaphors of other texts. The reference of the text in the dimension of literature is as novel as its formulation unique. Despite the fact that we have the above mentioned, similar reports at our disposal, and in the light of them, we might as well read the text rhetorically, it would not become interpretable primarily in its literariness, but in its authenticity. That is in the sense whether (or to what extent) it conforms to those case-studies that science—the par excellence fiction of fact finding—considers to be authentic (in this case, better to say, unquestionable).

It is not only the subject-matter of the text that is unnameable, but its most important textual peculiarity is also the fact that the approachability of its essence can only be realized according to the interpretative rules of orthodox

rhetorics as the decoding of the inherent meaning. In this case, concretely as the exegesis of the existing but inaccessible secret whose standard example is the reading of sacred texts. And it has nothing to do with whether we believe the author and in the authenticity and/or relevancy of his report or not. The gravity of meanings attracts and binds the interpretations to itself either purposefully or not. Therefore, as much as it is possible, I am approaching the text focusing not on, rather around its most meaningful parts and investigate the relation of its narration and plot as a first step.

The plot, even if the narration splits the time layers locally more times, follows the traditional beginning-middle-end division of three with death in its centre and duplicates in its beginning and end the theme of the "others" (beginning: alone among the "others" with the symptoms and the fear of death [11-147.]; middle: the doctors and the near-death experiences [151-257.]; end: among the "others" with the experience of death [261-271]). While the narration is based on the metonymical logic of succession, the plot is based on the—also traditional—metaphoric mirror structure of comprehension. The structure creates the impression of well-readability: the theme is the split of the causal chain captured in a mirror structure. The text thus could become interpretable in the (allegorical) structure of the narratives of initiation and/or travelling as the process of self-cognition, where the reidentification of the subject between its departure and return in a different form would imply the break-point (optical axis) beyond the visible territory and the transformational rules of meaning assignment.

Perhaps a similar interpretation of the story of comprehension could stand behind the (little bit bizarre) editorial decision which displayed the text in its mentioned first release, in the Christmas issue of the journal, broken by text boxes of shorter writings associated with the feast. The context—independently of the subject-matter of the text and the time of the plot, furthermore, of certain radical statements included in it (or perhaps just because of them)—makes the narrative appear as some kind of rewritten Ebenezer Scrooge story, where the narrator, due to the experience of seeing face to face, would get from A to B in the process of identification.

However, it is because of this very clear structure that the enigmatic reticence, moreover, emptiness by which the narrative describes the condition of the return becomes obvious, whereas it should rather reveal the differences, the process of becoming meaningful. The most important attributes of the narrating character before his death can be summarized by the following key-words: professionalism and a (mainly) professional contact with the outside world[8]; strongly reflected social relations viewed from a distance[9]; affection towards his wife[10]; consciousness, a distance from sensations[11]; the intensive, approaching fantasies of death[12]. The attributes represented after the clinical death are identical for the most part: isolation[13]; a strongly reflected following of social norms[14]; affection towards his wife[15]; consciousness, a distance from sensations[16]; the intensity of near-death experiences in fantasy[17]. Certainly, we can face a change: first, there is a total experience of unreality, a distance felt towards all the aspects of his previous existence, then there is an act of violence committed against himself by which he needed to recreate every relationship binding him to the world (271.). However, the fact that whether these recreated relationships differ in anything from the previous ones, that is whether the logic of their organization would change or not is not revealed. Although the theme of professionalism disappears, we do not get to know details about it. Although the subject-matter of the death fantasies changes, a change in the nature of the relation towards them (e.g. the thought of suicide[18]) is not mentioned.

The emerging comprehension is also problematic. After the fulfilled recognition (273-281.), the narrative ends with the intention of gifting the "large woman" (283.). The coat hanger was understood as the language of gestures spoken by the "large woman" during the hospital treatment, as the metonymical formation of the expression of sympathy. (155.). The reconsideration of the comprehension of this language of gestures as a gift would mean its posterior evidence, that is the token of thanks and gratitude told for the sympathy and care expressed by it formerly. Nevertheless, this would be completely symbolic if the gift was a single coat hanger, but, let us say, carved from cedar-wood. However, it is not a single coat hanger that is at issue here, but ten of "the best and the most expensive ones". The ten coat hangers do not function as symbolic signs separately any more, while together they possess not merely a symbolic, but a functional aspect as well, so to speak, a forcedness to be used. However, in their

functionality, from the point of view of the hospital practice (that is being understood as a donation), they are ridiculously insignificant: not only counted by the ten, but even by the hundred (it is different though if they come from a joiner). On the other hand, although the direct addressee of the gift is the large woman, the speaker, despite the distinction, thinks of the recipients[19] in plural, as equal elements or members of the same domain. Consequently, the gift is undecidably kind and intimate or cynical and humiliating, showing the inverse of the ambivalent hospital situation of humiliation and relief, bondage and knowledge (107., 254.).

The changed (power) relation towards the omnipotent guards of knowledge concerning the body and death (i.e. towards doctors) marks at the end of the story that knowledge has been transferred to the side of the speaker. However, although this change of attribute gets manifested as a *theme*, its content (meaning) remains unknown for the reader in the mirror structure of the *narrative*. Ergo, he understands (it), we do not. This knowledge exceeds human knowledge; it is total; it shakes everything; however, for the reader, it only appears as a similarly totalized question or lack standing at the place of comprehension.

The text works against the possibility of meaning attribution also in its language, use of metaphors. It is worth having a closer look at the particular textual references in relation to their texture because they represent all the possible dimensions of the apprehensibility of the theme. To this extent, their (quasi-)fragmented nature is also emphatic. However, they are rather markers demonstrated and dropped as useless ones at the same time, or if they are more persistent ones, they are systematically unsettled. Among the references, we can find religion, mythology, medical scientific language and finally, even literature itself.

The tropes of the inevitable God and Christ are the strongest signifiers in the context of the text, thus the text lays special stress upon their impossibilization. During the near-death experiences, God gets denied in his existence twice (203., 221.). One of the critics of the text draws a smart parallel with the similar attestation of Yuri Gagarin, the hero of Soviet space travel, after

landing, when the gravity of the Earth made him go round it in his space capsule within 108 minutes[20]. Nevertheless, irony—besides all its obscurity—already means something; consequently, the text gets refined: first, God becomes the metaphor of power, then—directly after his second denial—he is assumed as a signified reconsidered in its existence ("His"). This time, that very light is mentioned as his most authentic simile which later on appears as the ultimate signified at the end of the sequence of experiences (221.). However, this ultimate signified is identified with the light filtering through the window of the maternity wards (281.). That is to say, the chaos is complete, demonstrative. The two God-anthropomorphizing curses of the "large woman" stand in contrast with the two fine maneuvers around the God-signifier as the only long-term chance of the pragmatic use of language[21].

The Christ-signifier is a more complicated matter, thus the text escapes well in advance: the speaker does what is doubly undoable and looking back from over there, reads Christ's stretched body onto his own (231.) in a way that the bodily is in advance placed to the context of an emphatically narcissistic sexuality. This context does not only emerge in the text at the moment of death as an accidental and no longer controllable reaction[22], but also is represented as a fundamental disposition of the general human condition, which joins the body and the "others", the body and death[23] and (in this particular case) the body of the dead speaker and that of the dead Christ. "The symbol of Christian culture is a naked male body with covered loins," the author stresses in an interview[24] anatomizing the latent, sexuality-related organizing principles of culture. Ignoring the sacral meaning, which would even render blasphemy uninterpretable, we could only get to these latent connotations of culture from the sign if Christ's body meant himself at all. However, the text precisely keeps its distance even from them. As the subject-matter of Mantegna's pictorial *perspective*, the body of Christ is merely an arising *simile* of an optical enigma in *perspective* study.

Although mythology would not be short of matter concerning the theme, it is originally so distant that its meaning can be easily made inaccessible. The baying dogs of Cerberus (23., 29.) comport with the experience of clinical death, described as an unmarred, pristine state and characterised by euphoria and ecstasy, as much as a defibrillator does with the figure of Hades. Although the

linguistic obsession is obvious, the reflectedness of its voicing is none the worse. Calling upon Polymnia's aid is similar to this as well (169.). On the one hand, the invocation of the muse takes place derogatorily late, around the middle of the text. On the other, both her person and the mythological terrain the speaker hopes to get through "with common words" by the help of hers typically fall beyond the phraseology and reasonable interpretational domain of the common use of language. As finally, together with the invocation, the apostrophe itself as a figure of speech is primarily part of the elevated use of language. (In addition, the stylistic simplicity of the text is, to say the least, delusive.)

The medical technical language (mainly on pages 59., 105., 121.) gets revealed in the very contrast of the end, despite its all-embracing objective acuteness, as something uselessly inadequate and threatening too, because it is unable to reckon with its responsibility as an authoritative linguistic practice[25].

However, in contrast with what is said above, the language of literature is undisturbed and operable. Although among the literary references, the Beckett quotation is quite a remarkable misreading, by distinguishing and replacing the meaning of "self" and "I", it is not indefensible[26]. The Rilke reference is coherent just the same way (129.), and while one provides help in the (local) wording of the relationship between body and self, the other does so concerning the problem of "[p]ure sensory perception". That is on the allegorical layer of the language about languages, the text tells us that in the approach of the theme, apart from literature, every other language is misleading and should be removed. And the text itself, apart from maintaining the local possibility of meaning attribution as the most important result of its literariness, demonstrates the cleaned, empty place of meaning at the centre of the semiotic structure.

In addition to the narration and the use of language, the same structure seems to be the most important peculiarity of the formal-typographical formation of the book, too. The journal publication of the narrative is airy, interrupted rhythmically by line-spaces. It is divided into one and two-sentence long paragraphs and units of a few paragraphs apart from some longer (generally the "the most meaningful") coherent descriptions. This text formation served as the means of representing a contemplative attitude to the slowly unfolding events

and the narrated issues. Furthermore, it made possible and emphatic the highlighting of utterances conceived in different perspectives (state of consciousness, time layer) and also their (contrastive, interpretational and temporal) relation to each other. This kind of text formation is fully comprehensible from a textual point of view.

Although the airy layout has also remained unchanged in the book, the rhythm and meaning-forming role of the divisions has radically changed. The line-spaces have disappeared without trace, and have been replaced for the most part by single sheets and photos placed on the verso. However, place is not identical with function: the sheets isolate originally cohering segments of the text or unite segments originally divided by a line-space. Even if a setting technological justification might emerge here as an explanation for particular cases (by no means everywhere), the phenomenon still remains perfectly alien from the semantic and rhetoric aspects of text formation. The division of the text also differs in the case of the segments not modified in their coherence: paragraphs are not marked by indentations in the book, but by a new line justified left, which merges with the text better. Compared to the size of the sheets, the extension of the texts (that is the length of the blank part of the sheet after a particular text segment) is arhythmic here. The textual logic of text formation thus falls into the background or rather becomes amalgamated with the formal specificity of the body of the book.

The effect of all these on reading is quite remarkable. On the one hand, they make the practical implementing of reading more difficult (more critics of the book consider it important to mention this experience of theirs); on the other, they prevent the unfolding of reading in the symbolic dimension as well. The beginning sentence of one of the short segments of the original text (of course not divided by a space-line) is an expressive example for that. There the sentence does not give any causes for a lengthy lingering over it either:

A cup of piping hot soup is left on the table. (51.)

The book presents the above sentence not only on a separate sheet, but on a platform held by three photos on both sides, which does not occur at any other points of the book. As a result of this, we are forced to linger over the sentence long and still just as the narrator is forced to sit motionless over the hot soup placed on the table for a long time:

> For a long time I sat motionless over the hot soup at the white-clad table of the pub. (57.)

And as he does not understand what is happening to him in the text world, we too do not understand what is happening to us as readers in the scope of the book:

> You don't understand what is happening, [...] (55.)

The narrator confirms the fact and legitimacy of our embarrassment by changing the focalization and even highlights it by addressing us personally. Since the book, forming this part of the text into a metafictional allegory, proves just the opposite of what makes the proving possible, that is "in the novel, there is no Julien Sorel, sunset, truth: there are sentences in the novel"[27]. Anyhow, we are in the soup with this sentence.

The relation of the particular text segments and the photos can also be described as a textual-like (readable) connection only with difficulty. Although the shift of the photo series towards allegorism is obvious, the individual photos do not become interpretable this way (or any other ways), in the light of their textual counterpart. (Rather in the whole context of the text, but might as well without it, just confer their independent exhibition mentioned in the introduction.) A good example for that is the comparison of the different translations. The number and position of the pictures are the same in every edition, however, at some places, as the division of the text changes, different segments of the text become their counterparts on the opposite sides. (An "enjambemant" appears on one of the pages of one translation where it does not

in another one; certain paragraph boundaries become sheet boundaries in this or that translation, etc.) The relation of the text segments and the photos is not a close one.

However, the blank sheets found on fixed "pages" in every translation, namely on pages 8., 148., 260., 285. and 286., are closely linked to the text. These sheets follow the beginning and ending points of the three most important thematic units of the résumé: (the beginning of the narrative); rambling alone to the hospital; fallen into the doctors' hands and death; home coming and the comprehension of the things experienced; (the end of the narrative). Being part of a text, a blank page, an empty space would be the usual, moreover, ideal field of reading it into a text, but all these sheets (apart from the one standing after the end of the text), on the one hand, are situated on the side of the pictures, on the other, their meaning is caesural, that is unequivocal since they sign a blank by a blank, a split by a split, the unrepresented by the unrepresented. (For that matter, these boundaries are also referred to by the text itself.) The blank sheets are closely linked to the written text, but it is not a textual relation, less textual than that of the pictures and the text. In accordance with this, the page number (the last sign of the functional relation between a book and a text) is also missing from them. However, they are not blank spaces out of the system since they are parts of the physical extension of the book consisting of sheets, and as such, they also form part of the page numbering, which reflects the number of the sheets. It is this aspect from which they finally become really essential: the previous distinction of the body of the book and the text is necessary so that their correspondence—happening through these parallel, blank places with identical meaning—can be stated rhetorically.

Criticism has given voice to its doubt more times with regard to the structure of the book, which is diametrically opposed to the innately spontaneous style of the text intending to be inornate. Although the stylistic tension is unquestionably present, it is also obvious that this is only one aspect of the tension; the opposition is systematic and stems from the inner, rhetoric essence of the theme. The textual rhythm falls into background or rather gets amalgamated with the material rhythm of the sheets. The role of the basic units of meaning formation (sentence, paragraph, text segment) is strongly relativized by the sheet uninterpretable both semantically and syntactically. The text, considered as the

territory of signification, and the body of the book, an irrelevant technical field concerning meaning assignment, become equal. Namely, the book and the text strive to form themselves into such a self-identical, closed body which is as inaccessible and closed for comprehension as the very subject-matter it "incorporates". However, the example of the cup of soup at spotlight also indicates that it is not or primarily not some kind of encoded and decodable, matterful meaning which is at issue here.

The book follows the idea of the ultimate Book, which, being ultimate, refers only to itself: its reference is ever-lasting[28], its meaning is empty, its form is undetachable. Its text reminds of such a cryptogram which does not have a deciphered, segmented reading decoded as a text; therefore, in the different editions, it can be taken into hand unreadable, only in its body, in a facsimile as much faithful as the circumstances allow it. This inaccessibility is not the consequence of the secret as topic, rather, it is the effect of a structural conception on every aspect of the book. This is the structural imprint of the textually apprehended secret itself. Or, to put it in other words, it is the presence of the secret fixed in the book by the reader during its reading into a text (which is theoretically based on shifts and replacements). The presence of the secret shows through the narrative, the language, the body of the book and the "meaning" as well.

The central, ultimate metaphor of the text is birth—one of the most conventional ones for the apprehension of death. However, the text does not understand it in the Beckettian sense, as a causal chain (or a one-way relation) heading into the end (or nowhere) without any sense, and neither as the metaphor of religion replacing death with life in rebirth. Although the text does not follow that scientific hypothesis in its entirety either which sees the vivification of the unconscious memory content of birth (i.e. the death of foetal life) in near-death experiences, it takes advantage of it much rather for the unification of these two border points or border processes by taking out life of the two: his death is his birth (225.), but it is he who gives birth to his own death (217.)[29]. It is in this (unfoldable and unracionalizable) central image where the pattern organizing

every aspect of the book, the self-referential, empty, inherent meaning, the secret becomes apprehensible finally in its "meaning", too.

The secret is inapprehensible and undecodable. It is only its organizing force that can be experienced in the centre of the semiotic structure. The process of reading arrives at the point from where it has departed from, or rather at a point which it would have intended to avoid: reading gets stuck, the "interpretation" of the inaccessible meaning is the question of belief henceforth. What is really bewildering in *Own Death* is thus the fact that it does not merely force us to follow the practice of the reading of sacred texts in a literarily doubtful way as a consequence of the subject matter, but it is also capable of grasping and showing the place of its reference structurally and textually, which can be accessed by meanings only in banalities.

[1] Péter Nádas (1942-) is one of the most outstanding authors of Hungarian contemporary literature. He started his career as a photographer, and since 1969, he has been making a living exclusively out of his writings. They focus on the relation of the individual and power, the connections of history and personal fate, and on the bodily determinatedness of personality. Criticism approaches the interpretation of his works mainly from the direction of Thomas Mann's, Genet's, Musil's, Joyce's and Proust's literary heritage. His most important works translated to English are the following (it is the year of the first publishing that appears after the English title between brackets): *A Book of Memories (1986), Ivan Sanders and Imre Goldstein trans. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997). The End of a Family Story* (1977), Imre Goldstein trans. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998). *A Lovely Tale of Photography,* Imre Goldstein trans. (Prague: Twisted Spoon Press, 1999). *Love,* Imre Goldstein trans. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000). *Fire and Knowledge*, Imre Goldstein trans. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007). His three-volume novel flow, entitled *Párhuzamos történetek* (*Parallel Stories*), which was published in 2005 (Pécs: Jelenkor) and has meant the biggest challenge for criticism, is under English translation at the moment at the Farrar, Straus and Giroux Publishing House.

[2] Péter Nádas, *Own Death,* Janos Salamon trans. (Göttingen: Steidl Publishers, 2006). Henceforth, I am referring to the page numbers of this edition.

[3] Zsófia Mihancsik, *Nincs mennyezet, nincs födém – Beszélgetés Nádas Péterrel* (Pécs: Jelenkor Kiadó, 2006).

[4] Péter Nádas, *Der eigene Tod,* Heinrich Eisterer trans. (Göttingen: Steidl Verlag, 2002).

[5] The text of the biography I am referring to can be found in Péter Balassa's study collection entitled *Mindnyájan benne vagyunk – Nádas Péter műveiről* (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2007), 545.

[6] Hungarian edition: Péter Nádas, *Saját halál* (Pécs: Jelenkor Kiadó, 2004). French: *La mort seul à seul,* Marc Martin trans. (Paris: L'esprit des pénisules, 2004). Dutch: *De eigen dood,* Rob Visser trans. (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 2004). Spanish: *La propia muerte,* Adan Kovacsis trans. (Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2006).

[7] Péter Forgács dir., *Saját halál,* Duna Televízió Zrt., 2007. The film won the first prize of the Experimental Film category at the Budapest Film Festival in 2008.

[8] Meeting at the confectionary on business (19.); further, non-detailed programs (31.); contact with the publisher (27.) and the motif of galley proofs (29., 62-63., 89., 175.).

[9] "All the wile, I of course played my life role [...]" (19.); "Or is he not sweating, he asks, because he is once more repulsed by everything and everybody." (31.); an ascetic lifestyle (41.); "I sat here in the ice-cold failure of my upbringing." (65.); the theme of the "others" e.g.: "Before my death, in deference to others, I wanted to wash off the sweat of death." (83.)

[10] "This became most important now, along with correcting the galley proofs. How could I spare her?" (175.)

[11] From the fear of death: "I [...] saw it was the body's fear, not mine, [...]" (37.); from the scorching pain: "A double vision that comes almost inevitably with my profession often impaired my sense of reality, and so I had to be on guard against my own perceptions." (93.); from life-danger: "[...] what had

struck her was how dangerously calm I appeared." (105.); from the shock of reanimation, still under its physical effects: "[...] this much consciousness was a bit too much for him." (257.)

[12] "There was not a day when I didn't imagine my violent death: I was killed or I killed myself [...]" (39.); "I would have no objection to a sudden death by heart attack [...]" (89.)

[13] "[...] I was not here." (267.) "For a long time I didn't dare leave the house [...]." (283.)

[14] "I tried to do everything to their satisfaction [...]." (267.); "One knows what to do to be accepted by others [...]." (271.)

[15] Although "[f]rom the time one is brought back forcibly, one has nothing to do with anything. Not with objects, with other beings, [...] with anything." (267.), there is the skyey presence of his wife in the list of the few remained links to the world which are the most real in their intangibility: "The memory of a parfume Magda once used, evoked by this present parfume;" (269.).

[16] "One has feelings. If one pricks one's finger it hurts, but one has nothing to do with that." (267.) "One mustn't see the place a thing occupies in the overall structure, one must see the thing instead, the thing that others take to be real." (271.)

[17] "I couldn't forget its [...] familiar ribbing. [...] It was enough to think of it and it grabbed me again. [...] I longed to return to [... that] place [...]" (263.) "Once again it was enough to think of it to be grabbed by it." (275.)

[18] Cf. footnote number 5. Researchers of near-death experiences argue that the real significance of these experiences, their reality, incomparable to the effects of any drugs or shock, is verified nonetheless by that very large-scale, tendentially appearing change that these patients show up later in their personalities and lifestyles. That is these experiences have *meaning* concerning the lives of the patients. Such a highlighted typical change is the disappearance of suicidal fantasies. Nádas, among other things, also presses this point in the interview mentioned in the introduction (cf. Mihancsik, 50., 61-62.).

[19] "So that at least *they* would not have to run around for hangers." (283. Italics mine.)

[20] Szilárd Borbély's study is perhaps the most revelational writing about the discussed text. It is entitled "Átbillenni, átbukni, átfordulni, leválni...," in Péter Rácz I ed., *Testre szabott élet – Írások Nádas Péter* Saját halál *és* Párhuzamos történetek *című műveiről* (Budapest: Kijárat Kiadó, 2007), 60.

[21] In the Hungarian original, the conventional equivalent of the English "[f]uck this place" (155.) is a swear word which positions God to an obscene context, and which could have been better translated into English as "god damn it" or even more blasphemously as "god fuck it". See the other occurrence on page 177.

[22] "All the pain, [...] the fear of death [...] does not prevent from a certain narcissistic and exhibitionistic satisfaction from faintly shining through. / I can't look all that bad." (201.)

[23] It is quite remarkable how focused the text is when, after the undressing of the speaker, it dilates upon his "small black underpants, which were rather incongruous in [his] situation." (163.) (In the original: *very* small.) That pair of underpants is identical with fresh underwear that the speaker "put [on] for the sake of others who would find [him]" after washing off the sweat of death also "in deference to others" (83.); consequently, that underwear should be the most congruous in the situation. Although the colour and its meaning are funny, they are not definitely unexpected, but the adjectives "(*very*) small" and "incongruous" turning up beside these underpants are thought-provoking. There is not such a wide range of models in their case as there is in the case of female underwear; and, as the one size smaller would rather be *tight*, it is difficult not to understand a concrete thong by it. The adjective "congruous" thus has an ambivalent meaning. The theme of the (latent) sexual aspect of the body and the others, the body and death is well-anticipated.

[24] Enikő Darabos, "Hirtelen valami olyasmi közelébe kerül," (an interview with Péter Nádas), available: http://www.ahet.ro/interju/kultura/hirtelen-valami-olyasmi-kozelebe-kerul-211-45.html, access: 7 December 2008.

[25] The gifting taking place at the end refers to the coat hangers in a way as if they were not the exclusive subjects of the miscarried diligence of the doctors directed to their quest ("At least..."). Parallel to this, the relation of the practice unable to account for the essence and of the blocked language searching for its words also appears in a concrete simile in connection with the circumstantiality of the defining of the disease: "As if we had been getting to the familiar result in a stammer." (173.)

[26] Beckett: "'They give birth astride a grave.'" (215); Nádas' interpretation: "My mother gave birth to my body, I give birth to its death." (217. Cf. footnote number 29.); earlier: "The self, I thought, becomes what it formerly had been without the body and will remain un-embodied for eternity." (145.)

[27] An aphorism of the recent Hungarian literary theoretical discourse which has become folkloristic, and which comes from Gábor Németh or Endre Kukorelly, two of the most significant contemporary writers. My translation.

[28] The analogy of the narration is remarkable: the plot of the text is the past, whose reference is the future, and which is narrated emphatically in the present in the "dense"parts several times.

[29] In the Hungarian original, the second half of the sentence "[m]y mother gave birth to my body, I give birth to its death" (217.) sounds as follows: I give birth to *my* death. (My translation. Italics mine.)

A Matter of God: Entheogenic Substances in Philip K. Dick's Writings

Péter Kristóf Makai

"If, in reading this, you cannot see that Fat is writing about himself, then you understand nothing."[1]

"Either he had seen God too soon or he had seen him too late. In any case, it had done him no good at all in terms of survival."[2]

Horselover Fat / Phil, Kevin and David / Philip K. Dick

Science fiction is a strange child of twentieth century optimism and dystopian visions of the future. Popular culture associates the genre with lasers, aliens, spaceships, huge galactic empires and barely understandable technological slang that is mostly there to convince the reader that it is indeed hard science that the writer used in the making of such novels. This is what writers of the so-called "hard science fiction" tradition imitate doing. On the other hand, the futuristic setting and the technological otherworld that science-fiction novels depict often serve as a backdrop for the spiritual/religious subtext presented therein.

In order to demonstrate the validity of religious investigation in science fiction, I would like to examine a science-fictional novel by Philip K. Dick, a twentieth-century American author of SF, whose writing is frequently based on religious ideas. The paper focuses on two novels, *UBIK* and the *Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, both of which are heavily laden with religious imagery and concepts related to spirituality. Also, both novels use the vehicle of herbal and/or synthetic drugs to attain transcendental knowledge about the fabric of reality. In doing so, they evoke the concept of birth, rebirth and the intermediary, *bardo* state of existence of Buddhism, which I shall explore in depth.

However, despite the wide availability of mind-altering drugs, these experiences are not triggered by every drug trip. To resolve the issue of most characters' close contact with the divine, I will seek to understand this anomaly within the Gnostic tradition of Christianity (a branch of religious thought to which Dick himself subscribed) and its theological tenet of the *pneumatikoi*, the Chosen Ones who can catch a glimpse of the divine truth underneath the illusory nature of material existence. After a brief definition of what types of substances are used in the novels' religious rituals, I shall dedicate the rest of the paper to their appearance in *UBIK* and the *Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, and to their effect on the people undergoing the mystical experience.

As they are used by the characters in Dick's books in a spiritual setting for religious ends, I will call these substances entheogenic. The word comes from the Greek ἔνθεος and γενέσθαι, meaning "causing god to be within (a person)" and first used as such for the consumption of herbal parts in a paper by Carl A. P. Ruck and his colleagues[3]. In commenting on his two period-defining artistic milestones, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* and *UBIK*, I hope to detail the rituals and circumstances that surround entheogen-induced divine visitations. Also, I seek to understand the nature of these entheogenic experiences in the context of comparative studies of religion and to see how deeply do the ideas of Gnostic Christianity permeate the text.

"Entheogen" is not a popular or well-known term outside the academic fields of psychopharmacology and ethnobotany, even though its exact spiritual use has been with us since the beginning of ritual worship. Hallucinogens, as they also called, are part of a long tradition in mythology, acting as gift-plants from the gods, through which they speak to mortal men.

The most famous entheogen is the Indian *haoma* or Soma, a plant immortalised in both classical Indian mythology and, more recently, in the writings of Aldous Huxley. Schultes, Hofmann and Rätsch's landmark book on entheogens identifies Soma as *Amanita Muscaria*, the fly-agaric mushroom, and also informs the reader of its possible double as the Syrian Rue, or more correctly, harmal (*Peganum Harmala*).[4] Also, speaking of Soma, the book asserts that though "[m]ost hallucinogens are holy mediators between man and the supernatural, [...] Soma was deified. So holy was Soma that it has been suggested

that even the idea of deity may have arisen from experiences with its unearthly effects."[5]

These divine plants include peyote, exotic flowers, Mexican cacti and various reeds as well as the chemically synthesised LSD, all of which have been used for inducing or fortifying religious experiences. According to Stanislav Grof, religious experiences caused by LSD "appear to be phenomenologically indistinguishable"[6] from the mystical insights gained and divine visitations recounted in religious scriptures all around the world.

Despite all this, we have two distinctions to make. First, we shall only speak of entheogen use when talking about psychoactive chemicals consumed in a (spi)ritual setting and mindset. Second, even when talking about entheogens, we also have to acknowledge the possibility that mildly or non-psychoactive substances can also act as true entheogens, as is the case with the Holy Sacrament's bread and wine in Christian liturgy.

Entheogenic experiences appear in many of Dick's novels. The rest of this essay will be devoted to finding out just how exactly did these influence his body of work, cataloguing these findings in some manner and, at last, synthesising the experiences themselves and the surrounding set and setting to figure out whether the teachings of one religious tradition or another would give greater meaning to these rituals.

Truth be told, this investigation could very well include his semi-autobiographical novel, *VALIS*. The beauty of researching Dick is that he himself researched his own life vigourously and obsessively. Because of his unwavering sense of divinity around us, he has created an extensive self-report of his 2-3-74 experiences in his Exegesis, some of which filtered into *VALIS*. In the end, however, *VALIS* shall not form the basis of further discussion, partly due to the spatial constraints, and partly due to the scope of the analysis. Thus we now turn to two other novels to explore their entheogenic-religious motifs. In strict adherence to Dick's dual world-view, the positive example, *UBIK* shall be examined first, and the more ambiguous, the more complex novel, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* shall follow.

The story of *UBIK* is the adventure of a technician, Joe Chip, who works for Glen Runciter's organisation of anti–mind-readers. The organisation's main antagonist is Ray Hollis, who uses a wealthy tycoon, Stanton Mick to lure Runciter's team to Luna. The trap set up by Mick here kills Glen Runciter, who is transported back to Earth on a short notice to conserve the body in a state neither like death nor like life: half-life. Meanwhile, the team starts experiencing strange anomalies of reality. Things start moving back in time while at the same time the face of Runciter appears everywhere, the team get messages from him that suggests that he is alive and the team is dead. It turns out that the retrograde flow of time is caused by another half-lifer, against whom the half-living Ella Runciter pits her strength via the substance Ubik mentioned in the title.

This half-life is among the more prominent concepts of the novel's world. Half-life is a state when the body of the deceased person is cryogenetically frozen while the brain is kept alive in a simulated reality. Half-living bodies reside in mortuaries, where living people can establish contact with their beloved, thanks to the technological advancements of society in the future. For example, when the team seeks out Ella Runciter prior to going on their mission, she mentions a smoking cloud of red light in her half-life simulation, which his husband remembers from somewhere: "The *Bardo Thodol*, the Tibetan Book of the Dead, tells about that."[7] The exact title of the book, which is usually used as a subtitle, means: Liberation through Hearing in the Intermediate State.

"In Tibetan, the word *Bardo* means 'intermediate state.' There are six different kinds of Bardo. [... T]he fourth is the Bardo of the Process of Death, *Chikai Bardo*; the fifth is the State after Death, *Chonyi Bardo*."[8] The book of liberation through hearing chronicles dying thus. The smoking red light which Ella Runciter sees is part of the *Chikai Bardo*, the third stage of the dissolution of the elements: "When [...] fire, dissolves into the element air you will have the inner experience that everything is red, and will experience the sensation that everything around you is burning."[9]

Understanding half-life as some sort of a *bardo* is strengthened by the strange experiences of Joe Chip. The first ominous sign is the music of Giuseppe Verdi's Dies Irae: "He noticed then that subtle background music hung over the lounge. It had been there all this time. The same as on the chopper. 'Dies irae,

dies illa,' the voices sang darkly."[10] The second clue is found when Joe Chip calls room service. Instead of a hotel clerk, another voice is talking to him: "Runciter's voice. Beyond any doubt."[11] At first, the communication with Runciter, and the realisation that his own life is but a mere half-life comes across by means of sounds and human voices, as the accurate title of the *Bardo Thodol* would imply.

Liberation and reincarnation, the two outcomes of the bardo state manifest in half-life in two different ways. Don Denny is the first to come to this conclusion:

> 'Manifestations of Runciter' - that's the second process, along with the decay. Some coins get obsolete; others show up with Runciter's portrait or bust on them. You know what I think? I think these processes are going in opposite directions. One is a going-away, so to speak. A going-out-of-existence. That's process one. The second process is a coming-into-existence. But of something that's never existed before.[12]

One of those outcomes is marked by destruction, an entropic process, the other, the negentropic one, countering it. In an irrational world, forces of decay and forces against decay fight each other. Let us note this dualistic account of things in life and death for the time being, because it will prove to be an important factor in positioning Dick's visions on the religious spectrum of experiences.

In fact, it will become so important, that after transporting Runciter's body to the Beloved Brethren Mortuary, the owner of said mortuary, Herbert Schönheit von Vogelsang is greeted by Joe Chip with these words: "There's been an accident." To which von Vogelsang replies: "What we deem an 'accident' is ever yet a display of god's handiwork. In a sense, all life could be called an 'accident.' And yet in fact–"[13] Vogelsang's lofty theological proclamation nicely echoes the teachings of the Gnostics: "Gnostics have their own – perhaps quite startling – view of these matters: they hold that the world is flawed because it was created in a flawed manner."[14]

The mark of imperfection found everywhere in the world left the gnostics to ponder upon a force other than god to have created it. Al Hammond's sarcastic

quip is wrought in the same manner: "If god approved of half-life, each of us would be born in a casket filled with dry ice."[15] Taking and shaping the Gnostic teachings, Manicheists arrive at a similar conclusion: "Human life, just as any life in the Universe is merely the result of a divine defeat. Really, had the First Man won right at the start, neither the Universe, nor life, nor mankind would exist."[16]

In the next step of the *bardo* of death, "you will have [...] the external experience that all phenomena in the universe are being blown away by the winds of a great storm. You will hear a grinding roar like that of a thousand thunders."[17] The same symptoms of near-death phenomena come up in the novel, when Joe Chip

> became aware of an insidious, seeping, cooling-off which at some earlier and unremembered time had begun to explore him -- investigating him as well as the world around him. [...] What he saw now seemed to be a desert of ice from which stark boulders jutted. A wind spewed across the plain which reality had become; the wind congealed into deeper ice, and the boulders disappeared for the most part.[18]

And the unbearable sound of screaming and shouting can also be found here: "[O]n the great color 3-D screen a housewife critically examined a synthetic otter-pelt towel and in a penetrating, shrill voice declared it unfit to occupy a place in her bathroom."[19]

However, the disappearing universe, decay, the cold and death are not the only law of the land in half-life. It is antagonised by what Glen Runciter's team at first believe is their boss only, but in fact it is a group made up of Glen, Ella Runciter and the titular can of Ubik. Let us now go after this mysterious yet seemingly omnipresent Ubik, appearing at the beginning of every chapter.

If we only read these advertisements at the beginning of the chapters (all but the last one), we might get the feeling that Ubik is a consumer product, deeply rooted within the budding consumerist culture of the US. It could be a vacuum cleaner, a pain-killer, a wood polisher, a deodorant, a plastic bag, a cereal, even an aphrodisiac.

By examining the advertisement of the Ubique Elixir, we can draw several conclusions. For one thing, it is "guaranteed to restore lost manliness [...]

as well as to relieve reproductive complaints in both men and women."[20] in other words, it aids the negentropic processes within the system of the human body. Also, let us add to this an earlier description of Ubik, where it is said clearly that "Ubik powder is of universal healing value."[21] The big picture forming is of a panacea that not only heals everything but one that is available in every shape and manner. This image is fortified by the name itself: "'There's a Latin word very close to it: ubique. It means [...]. Everywhere,' Joe said."[22]

Joe Chip is informed of the existence of Ubik (a substance closely linked to Runciter) from a television commercial. He incorporates Gnosticism and the *bardo* state in a science fiction novel in a fitting manner. Here, Ubik is a consumer product which alleviates the fear of decay while in the early stages of half-life, in a world fundamentally insubstantial. Social criticism blends with and is strengthened by spirituality as doubt and belief gently undulate before turning into each other.

Ubik, however, is not only known by Joe Chip among half-lifers. Another member of the Runciter team, Francesca Spanish has dreams of Ubik, too. She relates one of these as follows:

> [a] great hand came down from the sky, like the arm and hand of God. Enormous, the size of a mountain. And I knew at the time how important it was; the hand was closed, made into a rocklike fist, and I knew it contained something of value so great that my life and the lives of everyone else on Earth depended on it. And I waited for the fist to open, and it did open. And I saw what it contained. [A spray can, on which] there was one word, great golden letters, glittering; golden fire spelling out UBIK. Nothing else. Just that strange word. And then the hand closed up again around the spray can and the hand and arm disappeared, drawn back up into a sort of gray overcast.[23]

The hand coming down from the sky is of a divine creator, like God, but not Him; the spray can is the prison of the physical and the moral constraints of man that form what in *VALIS* Dick will call the "Black Iron Prison"; the instinctive, sudden jolt of knowledge is gnosis itself; the cosmic importance of this event is explicitly referred to in the Ubik dream; the glittering, golden fire of

the letters symbolise both the ever-lasting divine spark of man that is the key to salvation, more so because gold is resistant to corrosion, while the fire can be interpreted as a cleansing fire.

Finally, the golden letters of the word UBIK, is the Word, the word of God. It is also a material substance in the half-life simulation, appearing as a gift of God, much like the entheogenic gift-plants. Its restorative powers give their users a sense of the divine, and if the consumption of a material object does just that, it deserves to be called an entheogen. This is how it introduces itself in the previously overlooked "advertisement" of the last, the seventeenth chapter:

> I am Ubik. Before the universe was, I am. I made the suns. I made the worlds. I created the lives and the places they inhabit; I move them here, I put them there. They go as I say, they do as I tell them. I am the word and my name is never spoken, the name which no one knows. I am called Ubik, but that is not my name. I am. I shall always be.[24]

Now that Ubik has been unmasked, it is time to look into the relationship of Runciter and Joe Chip, that will be just as revealing as the nature of Ubik. Take the team travelling to Luna as an example. Twelve people witnessed the death of Glen Runciter on Luna: seven men and five women. However, if we see the event from the perspective of the team members banished to half-life, we can conclude that twelve people *fell victim* to the blast: Glen Runciter lived and, according to Joe Chip, Zoe Wirt "had gotten out before the blast; he saw no sign of her."[25] Seen from this angle, the assassination attempt left six men and six women in half-life.

In both cases, the importance of the number twelve surfaces with some tenacity. Could the twelve witnesses be the twelve apostles? One of the men travelling to Luna is Tito Apostos. His surname is a cognate of "apostle". Apostle comes from the Greek *ἀπόστολος*, meaning "messenger", "person sent forth".[26] *Apostos* is the Spanish variant of the word. Having discovered that, the connection between the twelve people witnessing the death of Runciter and Christ is established, also strengthened by the fact that these twelve people came as envoys to Luna. The balance of feminine and masculine power is a further reference to the Gnostic view of the world.

This second balance reveals another fact: Joe Chip's initials coincide with Jesus Christ's. Reminiscent of an earlier point in the plot, where the image of Runciter-God emanates into the simulated world of half-life (including Joe Chip's pockets), after the death and resurrection of Chip, Runciter fishes out of his wallet at the end of the novel, only to find that the coins in it have the face of Chip on it. The Joe Chip-coins gain an increased significance as a symbol of resurrection, and it also suggests that the hierarchy of the two realities shifted and now Joe Chip resides in a higher state of existence. The simulated is real and the real is simulated.

To sum it up: we have a Holy Spirit in Ubik, a Son bearing the name Joe Chip. In order to complete the Holy Trinity, Runciter must be the Father. But can he bear that role in light of his actions throughout the books? First of all, after the bomb goes off, Joe Chip understands that he is on a mission now. He realises: "Since Mr. Runciter is injured, I'm now in charge – temporarily, anyhow, until we can get back to Terra."[27] Also, by the end of the book, his wife, Ella Runciter, an agent against the forces of decay gives Joe Chip a final task: "*I want you to replace me.*"[28] Now Chip's mission gains a religious meaning as well. Joe Chip shall be the heir to the Runciters, fighting against decay and its lord in half-life, Jory. This way the requirements of the Father-role are adequately fulfilled in the allegorical Christian reading. Now that every piece of the puzzle is available, the whole picture can be put together.

The entheogen-trinity is complete: Joe Chip uses Ubik, the divine present in the consumer society, which is also the proof of Runciter's existence, as a tool to attain knowledge. Runciter speaks to Joe Chip through Ubik, who uses products of Ubik to reach out and get in touch with the divine. The plum in the pie of Dick's social criticism is the fact that *theophagia*, eating one's way to God is taken literally to mean consuming God, which in a consumer society is not (only) through entheogenic drugs but everyday products. At the same time, he still retains the former entheogenic sense by interpreting the bardo-phenomenon as similar to the drug experience of using hallucinogens, like Timothy Leary did.[29]

Analysing *UBIK*, we came to the conclusion that entheogen usage is firmly embedded in a Gnostic Christian context. Dick's 1964 novel, *The Three*

Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch takes this concept, and elaborates on it to warn its readers of the dark side of the entheogenic experience. Its story is more complex and more fundamentally related to drugs, which is the reason why I wished to leave it until after establishing *UBIK* as a positive example.

Two illegal substances are in the focus of this novel: Can-D, a drug facilitating empathy and wandering around the virtual doll-houses of P. P. Layouts, while the other is Chew-Z, a new rival of Can-D on the market, one which radically alters its users' experience of time and space, promising to give them eternal life. The recently settled desert-world of Mars, where most of this novel takes place, is a target of dealers in both drugs. By examining them, one could earn a deeper understanding of Dick's stance on entheogens and their effects on humankind.

The domineering drug in this tale is Can-D; the illegal substance "chewed by so many colonists, was grown, processed, and distributed by a hidden subsidiary of P. P. Layouts."[30] Chew-Z is another herbal drug, "coming from [...] heavily guarded plantations on Venus"[31] and is produced from "a lichen similar to that used in the manufacture of Can-D".[32] Can-D's effect on the body is insignificant: users of the drug simply doze off as they mellow out, but in this trance-like state of the mind, it affects the psyche in a tremendous manner, and "the reaction you get to Can-D depends – varies with – your imaginative-type creative powers."[33] It can be consumed communally as well, and after chewing it "the users' minds fused, became a new unity – or at least that was the experience."[34] Time spent under the influence of the drug is called "participation", or in Martian slang, "transit,"[35] both phrases being very revealing in the spiritual context of consuming the drug.

In the hopeless misery that characterises the lives of most Martians, Can-D has a special place in making life bearable. Leo Bulero, the novel's protagonist describes the situation to his new secretary, Pia Jurgens, as follows: "It's like religion; Can-D is the religion of the colonists. [...] One plug of it, wouzzled for fifteen minutes, and – [...]No more hovel. No more frozen methane. It provides a reason for living."[36] Here, Can-D is explicitly used in a spiritual setting. Travelling to Mars, Barney Mayerson is advised to choose a religion by the time he arrives because it will be expected of him. To convince him, they say: "[Can-

D] brought about a lot of conversions to the established churches ... although many of the colonists find in the drug itself a religious experience that's adequate for them."[37]

Though the overtly religious terminology of the substance use is already a proof of concept, it is furthered by a comment made by Willy Denkmal, MD., an evolution therapist: "[B]lood and wafer; you know, in the Mass. Is very much like the takers of Can-D; have you noticed that affinity?"[38] The similarity of the Christian ritual to taking Can-D is one of the strongest arguments in favour of considering Can-D as an entheogen.

Translation, the word used for the miracle experienced under the effect of the drug is also used in a Christian context. It is capable of transforming the consumer's mind into a holy relic of sorts that can "travel" to the idealised version of Earth. Or, it might as well be that it can provide more than a simple religious experience. The pious Neo-American Christian, Anne Hawthorn confesses to Barney Mayerson that this might be the case: "[A]ll I know is religious faith and that doesn't equip me to understand this. These translation drugs."[39]

One of the Martian settlers, Fran Schein confirms that suggestion in a debate leading up to transit. The question is about what they experience under the effect of the drugs. Fran takes the stance "that whether it's a play [...] of drug-induced hallucination, or an actual translation [...], I think we should abstain [from sex]. In order not to contaminate the experience of communication. [...] We lose our fleshly bodies, our corporeality."[40] In the harsh, unwelcoming world, the myth of starting a brave new life fades away, because it is contaminated by corporeality, a word that is both existing and a portmanteau at the same time.

When the ritual becomes empty of meaning and value, a habit without content, believers try to find new ways to bring the religious character to life in themselves. These are provided by Palmer Eldritch, the businessman and pilgrim who spent ten years in the Prox system to return with a plant, a lichen. To see how the image of pilgrimage befits that journey, note what Pia Jurgens confesses about space travel: "I actually thought maybe by going that far [a space traveller would] find God."[41] The metaphor of travelling as pilgrimage entertains the

minds of new Martian settlers as well. This is why Barney Mayerson, still travelling, can claim that "[*w*]*hether I like it or not I've been born again.*"[42]

According to Palmer Eldritch, the lichen he procured from Prox is used by the natives, too, "in religious orgies. As our Indians made use of mescal and peyotl."[43] There is little doubt to the entheogenic properties of that lichen. Comparing it to peyotl and mescal is interesting, given the fact that the divine love Dick experienced with it is not part of the world that opens up after Chew-Z has been chewed.

The onset of the two drugs are rather similar, though. From this, Leo Bulero deducts that "[The Chew-Z world] was a nonexistent world, analogous to the irreal 'Earth' to which the translated colonists went when they chewed his own product, Can-D."[44] If only it were so simple! Eldritch's substance promises so much more. As he eloquently says: "I did not find God in the Prox system. But I found something better. [...] God [...] promises eternal life. I can do better; *I can deliver it.*"[45] The first person pronoun stands out, proving Eldritch's personal powers are god-like in comparison to the mere drug-engineering of P. P. Layouts.

The greatest difference between Can-D and Chew-Z, the experience of eternal life is described by Eldritch as follows: "When we return to our former bodies [...] – *you'll find that no time has passed.*"[46] It is "eternal life" as long as we consider the constraints of biological life dissolving in the subjective time of the entheogen properly "eternal". Eldritch predicts that "[i]t will only be after a few tries that [users] realize the two different aspects: the lack of a time lapse and the other, perhaps the more vital. That it isn't fantasy, that they enter a genuine new universe."[47] Or so Eldritch says. We will soon investigate the claim in depth.

When trying to prove his omnipotence, Eldritch gestures towards the drug world and says:

> [Y]ou didn't construct this – establishment, here; I did and it's mine. I created the glucks, this landscape [...]. [...] Every damn thing you see, including your body. [...] I willed you to emerge here exactly as you are in our universe [...]. [...] You see, that's the point that appealed to [the head of the UN], who of course is a

> Buddhist. You can reincarnate in any form you wish, or that's wished for you, as in this situation. With Chew-Z one can pass from life to life.[48]

The motif of cleansing and contamination described before returns here: as believers slide from corporeality to the religious experiences provided by the entheogens, they enter the *bardo* state where they are cleansed by the fire similar to Ubik's flaming inscription. However, there is no transitory period with Chew-Z; under its influence, the believers create the universe anew. Or do they? Let us now evaluate this claim of Palmer Eldritch!

Countering Leo Bulero's claim that Chew-Z will be less popular because the world it projects is without boundaries or control, Eldritch says: "Whatever [problem] was could be abolished, [...]. If you found you didn't like it. And if you did like it [...]. Keep it, then. Why not? Who's hurt? You're alone in your–,"[49] and then he theatrically covers his mouth. He gave away the Grand Secret of Chew-Z. Compared to Can-D, Chew-Z only gives an "illusory world in which Eldritch holds the key positions as god."[50] Bulero's idea of Chew-Z, however, is quite unlike the real thing.

We have to leave the book for a moment to ponder on the identity of Palmer Eldritch himself to have an idea of this illusory world. "Palmer" was also the name of medieval pilgrims who, having returned from the Holy Land, carried palm leaves all the way back home as a memento of the journey.[51] In this case, it is not a palm that serves as the function of the souvenir, but the lichen itself. "Eldritch" come from the Old English words æl-, "foreign, strange; from elsewhere" and rīce "dominion, sphere of influence", meaning: "otherwordly, belonging to the otherworld".[52] Both the first and the surname coincide with the role Eldritch plays throughout the novel.

Leo Bulero realises the true effect of the lichen gradually. Only once the simulacrum of Palmer Eldritch starts to push the drug on Mars does his exact nature surface. Leo likens him to something herbal, "growing and growing like a mad weed."[53] And again: "The man's a protoplasm, spreading and reproducing and dividing, and all through that damn lichen-derived non-Terran drug, that horrible, miserable Chew-Z."[54] It is relevant that the drug is extracted from a lichen. It comes from the Greek word λειχήνα, originally meaning: "what eats

around itself."[55] This way, it becomes clear that the all-consuming Chew-Z is more detrimental than Can-D, because it feasts on the user.

Palmer Eldritch is everywhere, he can enter anyone through Chew-Z, "it's all the same, it's all him, the creator. [...] The owner of these worlds [...] Eternal, outside of time and spliced-together segments of all other dimensions... *he can even enter a world in which he's dead*. Palmer Eldritch had gone to Prox a man and returned a god."[56] He is, however, not Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament. He is a blind, alien god, one that the Gnostic tradition knows well: it is Samael. John A. Tvedtnes claims that the Christian devil is the same as Samael, Aramaic for "the blind god."[57]

Applying our knowledge of Nag-Hammadi's Gnostic texts to Palmer Eldritch, it reveals more of his demiurgic qualities. "In the course of her journeyings, Sophia [Wisdom] came to emanate from her own being a flawed consciousness, a being who became the creator of the material and psychic cosmos [...]. This being [...] imagined himself to be the ultimate and absolute God."[58] This is the reason why, in his own ignorance, Palmer Eldritch can claim on his leaflet that he will deliver what God has promised, because he has no knowledge of the Gnostic god. The material and psychic cosmos, in this respect is the illusionary world under the influence of Eldritch, or, in *UBIK*'s terms, the half-life world.

There is a difference, however: Runciter-God is the ultimate Creator, the benevolent Gnostic god of knowledge, while Eldritch is merely a Demiurge: "What met Eldritch and entered him, what we're confronting, is a being superior to ourselves [...]. But I know you're wrong, Barney. Something which stands with empty, open hands is not God."[59]

Ubik is a negentropic force, but can we say the same thing of Chew-Z? Delving deep into the thoughts of Barney Mayerson, we see that while people spend their insubstantial time as choosers, "all over Mars that hideous drug is being distributed; think, picture, the numbers confined to Palmer's illusory worlds, his nets that he casts. [It is called] Maya. The veil of illusion."[60]

This the very same thing that Eldritch says when he unmasks himself: "It's not real, of course. That's the truth. [... I]t's an hallucination. What makes it

seem real is that certain prophetic aspects get into the experience, exactly as with dreams."[61] This prophetic aspect appears in *VALIS*, face to face, as Sophia, just like the Gnostics would call her. Quoting Hoeller once more: "Humankind contains a perishable physical and psychic component, as well as a spiritual component which is a fragment of the divine essence. This latter part is often symbolically referred to as the 'divine spark'";[62] this is the way the Gnostic teachings explain the prophetic aspect of the world.

There is one more remarkable idea that Dick presents us about experiencing god. By taking Chew-Z, Barney Mayerson unites with Palmer Eldritch, and thus partakes in a *unio mystica*, the mystic union of man and god: "He heard, then, a laugh. It was Palmer Eldritch's laugh but it was emerging from [...] Himself. [...] A great translation [...] had been accomplished, and possibly everything up to now had worked with this end in mind. [...] Now I am Palmer Eldritch."[63]

The *unio mystica* radically transforms the human mind, initiating a paradigm shift of values and principles. Leo Bulero cannot quite understand why Barney Mayerson would continue working on Mars without taking drugs. In the end, it is Anne who informs Leo that: "Part of you has become Palmer Eldritch, [... a]nd part of him became you. Neither of you can ever become completely separated again; you'll always be –"[64] this way, fused together, Leo and Palmer, yet not one or the other. The mystical union is complete.

The *unio mystica* has a peculiar (yet, when one knows about both of them, quite predictable) connection with entheogens: "The Hellenistic mysteries turned to archaic ritual behaviour (ecstatic dancing, tattoos, *the consumption of hallucinogenic plants*) to summon the gods, and even to attain the *unio mystica*."[65] This is the same behaviour Dick mentions in *VALIS*:

> The ancients possessed techniques (sacraments and rituals) used largely in the Greco-Roman mystery religions, including early Christianity, to induce firing and retrieval, mainly with a sense of its restorative value to the individuals: the Gnostics, however, correctly saw the ontological value to what they called the Godhead Itself, the total entity.[66]

If we were to translate this to Dick's world-view, we would be safe to assume that entheogens can indeed facilitate this mystical union and attain *gnosis*, but one has to be careful, because the difference between meeting the benevolent, negentropic Runciters or the blind and all-consuming Palmer Eldritch is enormous, promising insanity to those who meet the latter face of God. Only those can avert mental breakdown and the entropic attraction of the three Stigmata who are prepared, who can figure out the fact that they are of the *pneumatikoi*, and seek knowledge thus.

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Out of Context

Chico Buarque's *Budapeste*

Eszter Fürth

One could say that if the problem of address emerges in the case of a literary work, there should be a public that can understand 'intimately' that text, and this makes this public the real, 'engaged' readers of that text. But what happens, when a novel negotiates the engaged status of the readers, who can read it intimately? Chico Buarque's *Budapeste* does something similar with its Hungarian public.

In his study on the problem of address in world literature[1] Michael Allen investigates the question from two aspects: from the aspects of addressing and of reading. As he remarks the importance of the context was underlined on both sides by previous critics. In the case of the writer Allen refers to Sartre, and to the notion of the engaged writer, who can only speak from his own, actual position. In the case of reading Allen uses Sartre's notion of the split public. "We have, then, if we are to speak of split publics, one public for whom the text is a matter of reading and another public for whom the text is a matter of intimate understanding. An engaged writer, it seems, speaks closely to those who can intimately understand while being read by readers outside the immediate situation."[2]

The one, who can understand the text intimately, is the national, or as Fanon, the other writer used as source by Allen, says, the experiential reader. This reader is a part of the nation the text is addressed to, but this nation is not only an abstract category, but an "ever-present reality of the people". By this contextualization this reader understands all the allusions used in the text, while a non-national, non-engaged reader can recognize some links to the situation, but can never feel these references as deeply as the national does.

Allen's examples seem to be quite relevant in the case when a novel plays with the problem of the address, but rejects the classic model of the "engaged" writer and its text to a national public, and starts to play with the

opposition of an "engaged" and "non-engaged" reader, situation and the opportunity of finding an authentic experience. The Brazilian Chico Buarque's *Budapeste* does play with these categories. This text calls into play the images of a culture known by an engaged and a non-engaged public by changing the perspectives of a Brazilian and a Hungarian context. Buarque's novel is a perfect example of the post-modern text that deconstructs the position of the author, brings the text back to itself by representing its self-reflective and self-constructing characteristics. However, my aim is not to analyze these textual instruments, but to find the consequences of a Hungarian aspect of reading. The novel tries to represent an authentic Hungarian context, but from a Brazilian point of view. This 'trick' had a significant response in the Hungarian criticism, but was always treated as a fault, or was said to be irrelevant for the purposes of the novel. Now I would like to emphasize that these elements have bigger importance, first and foremost from a Hungarian point of view. As we cannot read the text without recognizing these 'faults', we should bear them in mind throughout the interpretation. Now my aim is to find a way of reading this novel analyzing how it treats our engaged position, and how it treats the relationship between Hungarian and Brazilian culture.

The novel tells the story of a Brazilian ghost-writer José Costa whose works are very successful, but certainly his discretion not allows him to be a famous personality. Once, because of a crash-landing, the protagonist has to spend a night in Budapest, and falls in love with the Hungarian language. Later he returns to the country and with the help of a Hungarian woman, Kriska, he learns the language and becomes a successful ghost-writer also in Budapest. Later, returning to Brazil, he thinks that his career is finished, but after a while he is called from Hungary to come back, to enjoy his life as a celebrity writer, but whose book was written by another ghost-writer.

Buarque's novel plays explicitly with the notion of the writer, who puts himself into different contexts, who doesn't only uses masks, but who changes personality while writing. As Costa says in the book, not the others, owning his writings, were those who wrote into his books, on the contrary: it was he who wrote into theirs. "*Porque para mim, não era o sujeito quem se apossava da minha escrita, era como se eu escrevesse no caderno dele.*"[3] After finishing the book for a German man he feels that the words just written down escape from

him: "*Palavras recém-escritas, com a mesma rapides com que haviam sido escritas, iam deixando de me pertencer. Eu via minhas palavras soltas na tela e, horrorizado, imaginava que elas me abandonavam como o alemão perdia pelos.*"[4] Costa, when reading the texts of his new rivals in the firm, recognizes that the young employees (who do the work that should have been written by Costa), write the same words that he would have written. As he reads the text of the young boy, he tries to figure out what should the next sentence be, and it stands there, just as he thought, but written by another person. "*Era ter um plagiário que me antecedesse*"[5] The separated self of the writer comes more explicit, when he starts to write in Hungarian. While learning the language Costa doesn't speak a word in his mother tongue, Portuguese, in order to forget all his memories and all his previous personality.

The multiplicity of the author in Buarque's novel draws attention to the ad hoc situation of writing. With the radical fragmentation of the author Buarque makes the position of an engaged writer impossible. He reaches this on the one hand by the fact that Costa is a ghost-writer, who writes in the name of other persons, what makes the seek for the real context of the (real) writer impossible and indifferent. On the other hand, he can negotiate the engaged writer by the multiplicity and ephemerality of contexts, by the immediate "death" not only of the figured writer, but also its cultural context.

Buarque's text not only dislodges the status of an engaged writer, but also that of an engaged public. The scene of this play is not inside the text, but in its cultural context, in its critical afterlife. The Hungarian reviews and critics of the novel can't help mocking at the stereotypes used by the text. The main experience, from which the story is developed, is the Hungarian language and the city of Budapest. Costa becomes a great admirer of this culture, but the examples mentioned in the novel sounds funny for a Hungarian reader, as many of them are typical stereotypes, which are never used in reality.

Homi K. Bhabha writes that the stereotype has the characteristic of the fetish, as it hides the differences which are already known. According to Bhabha, the fetish is an ambivalent faith evolved by the recognition and rejection of differences. The desire for the unity of origin is menaced by the fragmentation, and the stereotype, while hiding differences, offers a point of identification, that

is a place of fantasy and defense. Stereotype is a fixed form of representation, which denies the play of differences.[6] The hiding of differences happens in the *Budapeste*, as Buarque shows some fetishes of the Hungarian culture, like the history of football, the mythical connection with the Huns or the romantic pictures of the Tabán in Budapest.

The Hungarian names in the novel are bizarre, thanks to a special idea, that all the streets, squares and persons in the novel's Budapest are called by the names of the 'golden team' of the legendary Hungarian football of the 50's. This is how Costa names the writer Hidegkuti István, the secretary Puskás Sándor, the poet Kocsis Ferenc, the professor Buzánszky Zoltán, the inspector Grosics, and the publisher Lantos, Lorant&Budai (to be more tricky he changed the forenames). Costa appears on the Czibor square, on the Bozsik alley, and in the Hotel Zakariás. Not only the names are built up by Buarque's fantasy, but the whole city is figured out by him. For example, after the dance on the top of the Tower of Attila (never existed in Budapest), they go to Óbuda (a district full of houses of concrete built in the socialist area) for a walk in this old, medieval part of the city, full with straw-roofed houses (nowadays only existing in open-air exhibitions), and after the walk they listen to some operettas (in reality listened only by grandmothers, tourists and some fans of the genre).

These pictures should be the fantasies of Hungary by a foreigner, who lives very far from Central-Europe. These fantasies are enriched with some non-existing characteristics of the Hungarian language. For example, when Kriska wants to say sorry to Costa, she uses the form, 'punish me infinitely', that is (according to the text) is a usual form of saying sorry in Hungarian. "*Como forma coloquial de se expiar uma culpa, existe a expressão magiar* (sic!) *végtelenül büntess meg, isto é, castiga-me infinitamente, numa tradução imperfeita.*"[7] Another non-existing linguistic example is the name of Costa's love and Hungarian teacher. Fülemüle Krisztina has a nickname, Kriska, because, according to the text, in Hungary this is the short form of Krisztina. Unfortunately, the name Kriska is never used by Hungarians, and sounds quite foreign for a native reader.

From a non-Hungarian point of view the real addressee of this novel, who understands all the allusions, cultural, geographical and linguistic references

should be the Hungarians. Although the author is Brazilian, we should be the ones who are engaged in the situation, the cultural context that the text invokes. As we saw by the examples, Buarque is not the 'cosmopolitan' writer who identifies himself with the Hungarian cultural context (as he said, he had only a map of Budapest and a Hungarian dictionary), and the Hungarian readers are not the ones, who are the only understanding addressees. We could say, that any reading public except for the Hungarian one could be the ideal addressee of this novel, any other reading public which don't recognize the false allusions to our culture. Using Sartre's form of a split public, we could say that Hungarians should be those who understand the text intimately, and the other readers should be those for whom the text is only a matter of reading. In case we remind ourselves of the fact that the novel works with stereotypes that are familiar to the foreigners, but are not used/practiced by Hungarians, we can change the previous binary. We can appoint that all those who knows nothing or not much more than a tourist about Hungarian culture can understand the text with their 'hearts' because for them these stereotypes are the elements from which the image of Hungary is built up. While Hungarians who know their own culture from an internal aspect are those who can interpret the novel with their intelligence (considering that these are the elements by which we are known).

However, this turning of the opposition leads us to the delayed status of the engaged, national reader. From the point of view of a foreigner the engaged readers should be the Hungarians, and vice versa, for the Hungarians, the foreigners own this position. As we can see, nobody can truly own the position of an engaged reader, Buarque's novel doesn't offer this position.

In his study Michael Allan arrives to the problem of the authentic experience. As he says "the tension plays out not so much on the level of who reads and who does not, but, more crucially, on the level of what gets deemed authentic experience".[8] In the case of *Budapeste*, the question emerges whether it is possible to point to a context that could function as an origin of an authentic experience, when the only thing that appears in this novel is the ironic delay of this experience.

It would not be correct to handle Buarque's novel as a false interpretation of Hungarian culture, or as a demonstration of the lack of knowledge in relation

to Hungary or Budapest. As we have seen previously, the novel underlines the notion of the fragmented writer, who can never be located, and who does not have an intimate origin or a language as a native tongue. The same structure happens to the audience of the novel. The stereotypes used by Buarque make it impossible for a Hungarian reader to accept the story as their own, but rather owning an ironic attitude that keeps a distance between the text and its reader. But not only the Hungarian readers can feel this distance, since the other, Brazilian scenes of the novel are constructed of stereotypes as well. Actually Buarque knows the Brazilian context, culture and everyday life very well, so the use of such stereotypes should be the part of a wider notion.

The Brazilian stereotypes are not as explicit as the Hungarian ones, but are present in the novel. The name of the protagonist, José Costa is a typical one, it doesn't have the unique sense a name should have, just like in the case of Kafka's Josef K. José Costa could be as well the Portuguese equivalent of the name, Josef K., being as much a no name member of the society, as Kafka's protagonist. José Saramago uses the name José for the same thing, because it could be anybody. As he underlines it in his novels, the name José and Maria are the synonyms of man and woman in Portuguese. In the *Evangelho Segundo Jesus Cristo* the narrator tells that if someone said Maria, all the women would listen, even if it is not her name, because the name Maria and woman are the same.[9] The same thing happens with the name José, which is the equivalent of men. The protagonist of the *Todos os Nomes* is called Senhor José, who is an employee of the Central Registry of Births. He is an everyday secretary, who works with names degraded to numbers. He is similar to the files he manages, for he is like a piece of data, using a name, which is between a name and a non-name, like a number, José.

The name José Costa is an empty sign, a typical stereotype of the Brazilian/Portuguese man. Costa's partner in the firm is called Cunha, which is also a typical Brazilian element. The famous Euclides da Cunha was the author of the legendary novel, *Os Sertões* that was one of the most important novels of the independent Brazilian literature. Cunha's novel of the war in Canudos served as theme for many authors, such as Sándor Márai, who wrote his *Judgement in Canudos* (*Ítélet Canudosban*) under the impression of this novel. Just as the novel *Os Sertões*, so as Cunha is a typical sign of the Brazilian culture. This is

why the name of the protagonist's firm, Cunha & Costa Cultural Agency is a stereotypical element. If this was not explicit enough, the window of the office fronts to the beach Copacabana, which is one of the most important and famous stereotypes of Brazil. When Costa, living in Hungary, thinks of Brazil such typical pictures come to his mind, like the Pão de Açúcar or a child consuming drogs. "*No meio de uma aula podia me acontecer de pensar no Pão de Açúcar, digamos, ou num menino careca fumando maconha, ou na Vanda chegando de viagem, a Vanda perguntado por mim, a Vanda enrolada numa toalha branca, mas se Kriska me surpreendesse desatento, batia palmas e dizia: a realidade, Kósta, volta á realidade. E nossa realiade, além das aulas cotidianas, era a Budapeste dos fins de semana alternados em que Pisti ficava a cargo do pai.*"[10]

The protagonist thinks of his own country as it was only a tourist experience, built up by typical pictures of the country and personal pictures of his wife, Vanda, which are mixed in his fantasy and become unreal. This is emphasized by Kriska, who calls back Costa to reality. But this reality is also a non-existing fantasy, because their so called reality is Budapest, just as figured as Brazil is in the novel.

It is not surprising, that the picture of Brazil in Hungary is built up by stereotypes, just like the Hungarian culture in Brazil. But there is a main difference between these two schematic images and that is the everyday presence of Brazil in the world's culture. The economic export of this country has been very important since the beginnings of a European-like civilization in that land. Brazil was the jewel of the Portuguese crown, and also a significant fountain of the goods used in the European country. Before the end of the colonial relationship between the two states the economic and natural power of Brazil was bigger than that of Portugal. This resulted in the colonizer state being the one dependent on its colony and not the other way around.

Nowadays the economic export of Brazil is still important, but that of the cultural products has a greater effect on popular thinking. As Fernando Arenas[11] points out, the cultural relationship between Portugal and Brazil is not equal because although the Portuguese high-culture is well-known in Brazil, the Brazilian popular culture has such a remarkable effect, that its everyday culture, language and thinking is much more known and accepted in Portugal, than that of

Portugal in Brazil. In Portugal this has a remarkable effect on the language, as in 2008 they decided to enforce the unified spelling rules of the Countries of Portuguese Language (CPLP – Comunidades dos Países de Língua Portuguesa) accepted in 1990, and already ratified in Brazil, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Prinicipe. These new rules in many cases accept the Brazilian way of writing, and not the European, so the Portuguese writing suffers a larger alternation than the Brazilian did. This may be an effect of the phenomenon that due to the everyday presence of the Brazilian media culture, the Portuguese understand the Brazilian language, but the Brazilians have difficulties in understanding the European Portuguese.

Not only Portugal, but all Europe has a daily connection with Brazilian culture. Brazil's cultural presence in this side of the ocean is due to its music (Chico Buarque himself is known primarily for his musical activity), its football, its famous sport/ritual, the capoeira and its media culture, first and foremost the telenovels. All these genres mediate information and stereotypes of the country that communicate a coherent image of this culture. In the case of the telenovels this characteristic is typical due to its function of popularizing a nation's features both inside and outside its borders. Not only Brazilian serials use this tool, for example, the Mexican telenovel, *Destilando Amor* dedicated long minutes in several episodes to conversations and inserted mini-films on the procedure of tequila production. This was a communication of an image of Mexico, as the authentic fountain of the tequila, and of a country with a tradition known and accepted all around the world. Certainly this image was a simple romantic picture of Mexico, with the agave plants bathing in golden sunlight and with the beautiful and honest workers, but had the message of a successful economy, constructing a better image of the country both in Mexico and in other cultures.

The Brazilian telenovels also use elements to communicate a good image of the country to the outer world. These characteristics are many times the same that ware mediated by the romantic literature of the country that has not only an esthetic significance, but a pragmatic (socioeconomic) importance as well. In the 19th century Brazilian intellectuals tried to construct a grandiose and proud self of the nation. To reach this aim there were eight 'myths' in use, which appeared in literary and journalistic texts: the myth of the grand terrain; the rich nature of

the country; the equality of all Brazilians; the nobility of the Brazilian man; its hospitality and goodness; the patriarchy; the Brazilian woman, its beauty, sensibility and morality; the high level of the Brazilian civilization; and the myth of the 'Pax Octaviana', the state without war. These myths are used nowadays as well, not only in literature, but also in telenovels, this is how these cultural topics arrived to Hungary for example. Just to mention some serials broadcasted in our television, the *Mulheres de Areia* (Women of the Sand) transmitted the myth of the beauty of nature, especially the beach[12]. The *Top Model* focused on the myth of the Brazilian woman, while the *Rei do Gado* (King of Livestock) emphasized the abundance of the Brazilian land.

The *A Escava Isaura* (The Slave Isaura) is a telenovel that has a special emphasis on the importance of national identity. The origin of the story, Bernardo Guimarães's novel suggests this theme, as it is an important piece of Brazilian national romantic literature. The serial just as the novel emphasizes the myth of equality of all Brazilians, as it focuses on the '*abolicionismo*': the liberation of slaves. The 2004 remake of the legendary telenovel focuses on another romantic topic, the 'indianismo'. The hero of the Brazilian literary romanticism was the Native American, the figure, who–just like the cavalier in the European historical novels of romanticism–saved the poor and the women, fought with the evil, and was the most noble-hearted character in literature. This figure appears in the telenovel, saving the life of a character that was attacked on the road.

As we can see, the presence of Brazilian national myths and stereotypes in Hungary is an everyday phenomenon on television, and this presence is strengthened by the touristic importance of the country, appearing in ads and other forums of dreamy pictures of a summer paradise.[13]Another factor of the popularity of Brazilian culture is the importance of sports. The immense spread of capoeira clubs brings the fighting technique of the poorest inhabitants of Rio's 'favelas' into the sport clubs of Europe. And–first and foremost–Brazilian football is known all around the world, also as another chance for the poorest to become a star. The Hungarian readers can recognize these well known stereotypes in the novel of Buarque, as they can see the world of telenovels, travel guides and sports magazines in it. The everyday presence of Brazilian culture in Hungary makes the recognition of Brazilian stereotypes for the

Hungarian readers easy. As they see the typical scenes of the telenovels and sports magazines in the novel, they could associate to these genres. This knowledge helps the Hungarian reader in rejecting these images as a native experience of this country, although Buarque is Brazilian. For a Hungarian public then it is obvious that there is no authentic scene in this novel, though it seems to offer two: one for the Hungarian and one for the Brazilian readers.

From another point of view it would be obvious to say that for Buarque, the use of stereotypes, the hiding of differences was the instrument of emphasizing that the scenes, countries and languages don't have any importance. The country beloved so much by Costa could be anywhere else, and the language could be anything that is hard to understand for a Brazilian.[14] And vice versa, the protagonist could have any nationality, there is no importance of what countries and languages are mentioned. The point is only to have two countries far enough from each other to be as alien for the fragmented protagonist as it would be for a child.

However for a Hungarian reader the situation wouldn't be so simple, as he is the reader, who cannot avoid the recognitions that show the stereotypes. These elements, as they cover the differences, remain empty for these readers, and instead of constructing a real engagement, they develop an ironic relationship between reader and text.

If we follow Michael Allen's thinking and look for the answer for not who is reading and who is the engaged reader, but rather what can be considered as authentic experience, we can find that the novel rejects such an experience. Buarque is playing with this experience, as he tries to show it up from a foreign point of view. He shows a mirror for Hungarian culture, but this mirror shows not the Hungarian context itself, but rather a Hungarian culture from a Brazilian point of view. However, this mirror as it shows an image built up by empty stereotypes and unreal elements shows not the observed Hungarian but the observing Brazilian side of the relation. The mirror reflects the observer himself, but as this image is also unreal (as it is also built up by stereotypes), the whole reflective action remains empty. For both sides, the image seen in the mirror will be a foreign one, a collection of stereotypes.

As Renate Lachmann says, there are two ways of existing as a foreigner or stranger in a culture. She differentiates the "the foreign foreigner" and the "native foreigner". The "foreign foreigner" is the member of another culture, and its otherness comes from its different cultural habits, rules, etc., while the "native foreigner" is a member of the group that treats him as other. The "foreign foreigner" is considered as enemy, while the "native foreigner" is treated as a sorcerer. These two categories keep changing as the differences between insider and outsider appear inside one culture as incorporated otherness. The foreigner becomes a sorcerer inside, constructing a double culture. [15]

The same thing happens in the *Budapeste*, when Hungarian culture appears as a foreigner for itself because its culture is seen from outside, and is presented as something strange to the Hungarian context. The image shown by the novel declares itself to be an authentic insight into the Hungarian culture, but remains a foreign, stereotypical view. The Hungarian culture represented as a "foreign foreigner" becomes a "native foreigner" for itself.

From a Hungarian point of view Buarque's novel plays with the notion of engaged public, in a manner that it does not offer a status like that. The Hungarian reader can read the novel 'intimately', but cannot be engaged to it. It also negotiates the opportunity of finding an authentic experience, in which the novel could be contextualized. Though the novel seems to offer two engaged aspects (the Brazilian that observes Hungary, and the Hungarian that is observed by a Brazilian who became Hungarian), what remains is nothing more than the stereotypical images of these two countries. With its stereotypical elements it shows a double mirror for the Hungarian and Brazilian culture, but both sides of this mirror is empty, using a foreign picture of both cultures. For a Hungarian reader this double emptiness can be obvious, and by this recognition the *Budapeste* can be interpreted as a deconstruction of what is called authentic experience.

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[1] Allen, Michael (2007)

[2] Allen, Michael (2007), 7

[3] Buarque, Chico (2003), 22

[4] Buarque, Chico (2003), 37

[5] Buarque, Chico (2003), 26

[6] Bhabha, Homi K. (2002), 637

[7] Buarque, Chico (2003), 55

[8] Allen, Michael (2007), 17

[9] Woman in Portuguese is mulher, beginning with the same letter as Maria. This alliteration is brought into game in Saramago's *Manual de Pintura e Caligrafia*, where the love of the protagonist is called M.

[10] Buarque, Chico (2003), 56

[11] Arenas, Fernando (2003), 23-27

[12] This has been a beloved theme since the beginnings of Brazilian literature. There are many famous descriptions of Brazilian coasts, just like the first manifestation of the Brazilian literature, the *Carta de Achamento* of Pero Vaz de Caminha, or the famous part of Bento Teixeira's *Prosopopeia*, the *Descripção do Recife de Paranambuco*, etc.

[13] The image of Brazil as an earthly paradise has its roots in the time of colonization, when the land was communicated as a heavenly place to both the Portuguese crown and the expected settlers.

[14] There is an allusion of this lack of importance in the text, when Costa meets two Romanian people and thinks that they speak Hungarian. He understands some words, but he thinks that Hungarian, just like so many European languages has many words taken from Latin.

[15] Lachmann, Renate (1996), 284

Curtain

Zoltán Lengyel

With the lights out it's less dangerous.
Here we are now. Entertain us.

Kurt Cobain

The end of a première always fades out into a perfect silence in which the afterlife of a performance is at stake. The enthusiasm or the refusal of the audience, following this moment of perfect silence, determines the destiny of the performance; its destiny depends on whether the audience accepted the play for what it is or not. Applause means success, booing means failure: these signs are unequivocal beyond the possibility of dispute. Naturally, now and then, applause might be disturbed by some faint critical or even enthusiastic booing, and a chorus-like booing too might be mixed up with some lonely sounds of clapping or even bravoing. A failure at the première does not totally determine the destiny of a performance; audiences vary, and the relation between audience and performance might change. In the life of the so-called society each moment of social role-playing count as a première; even if one might have the impression that the dilettante players and actors of society, politics and life hold only worse and worse rehearsals each time with no end. During such plays of the so-called society though, in contrast with the institution of classic bourgeois theatre or opera, one can never be solely a member of the audience without consequences. The one who sat among the audience yesterday is the one who takes the leading role of the comedy today; and tomorrow s/he will be just another extra. The impression that directors and theater-makers of society, who are said to rule this so-called society, have even relatively immobile positions or roles rests on a shallow presumption. In the social scene the director is just another actor who should be the most excited about the success of the play because s/he may have

the most to lose. Success should be attained from moment to moment; the perfect silence determining the further fate of the performance is at the threshold of each moment. And although one can never have a rented seat among the lines of the audience, the one who initiates clapping or booing at a social play cannot take part in the performance in that moment: there and then s/he has to be an outsider.

I.

„Er war als Premierenmacher gefürchtet. Er riß mit seiner Begeisterung, weil er damit ein paar Sekunden früher als die anderen eingesetzt hatte, die ganze Oper mit. Andererseits landeten mit seinen Erstpfiffen die größten und die teuersten Inszenierungen, weil er *es wollte, weil* er *dazu gerade aufgelegt war, in der Versenkung. Ich kann einen Erfolg machen, wenn ich will und wenn die Voraussetzungen dafür gegeben sind und sie sind immer dafür gegeben, sagte er, und ich kann einen totalen Mißerfolg genauso machen, wenn die Voraussetzungen dafür gegeben sind, und sie sind immer dafür gegeben: Wenn ich der erste bin, der Bravo schreit oder der erste, der pfeift. Die Wiener haben Jahrzehnte nicht gemerkt, daß der Urheber ihrer Operntriumphe letzten Endes der Paul gewesen ist, genauso der Urheber der Untergänge im Haus am Ring, die, wenn* er *es haben wollte, nicht radikaler, nicht vernichtender hätten sein können. Sein Für und Wider in der Oper hatte aber mit Objektivität nichts zu tun, nur mit seiner Launenhaftigkeit, mit seiner Sprunghaftigkeit, mit seiner Verrücktheit."*[1]

Der Paul is Paul Wittgenstein, nephew of the famous philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, and the central object and character of Thomas Bernhard's book *Wittgensteins Neffe*. Of course, the existence connected to the other name on the cover (Thomas Bernhard) is at least as central an object and character of that book as the existence connected to the name Paul Wittgenstein is. This is implied by the subtitle: *Eine Freundschaft*; the subject matter is the description of a friendship which presupposes two persons. The motto, copied from the closing passages of the book itself, presupposes somewhat more people, at least two hundred: *Zweihundert Freunde werden bei meinem Begräbnis sein und du mußt an meinem Grab eine Rede halten*. This sentence is the last will of the book's character Paul Wittgenstein, and it is a request addressed to the book's other character Thomas Bernhard. It is rather rare in Bernhard's books that mottos are taken out from the books themselves, and with *Wittgensteins Neffe* it is the sole occurrence that the addressee of the motto is the character named

Thomas Bernhard. This character finally did not take the role which his friend asked him to take. He did not fulfil the request, did not make a speech above the grave of his friend; at the grave there were not two hundred friends at all, only eight of them. The author named Thomas Bernhard, however, has documented and published his memoranda as a book, commemorating, as a gravestone, though less mutely, the dead Paul Wittgenstein. The character named Thomas Bernhard, according to the author named Thomas Bernhard, has never visited the gravestone of Paul Wittgenstein since the latter's death.

The secret of Paul's art of bringing about success or failure in the opera lay in the bare fact that he was the first who dared to break the deadly silence following a performance, perhaps because he simply let himself live through his first caprice, his first will, his first signs of madness. With his lonely firstness, with his separation from the homogeneity of the rest of the audience the necessary conditions for creating success or failure were given at once. His way of thinking and acting was thoroughly operatic way of thinking and acting, so it was a musical and a theatrical way at the same time. Where conditions are given simply by the bare fact that he is the first to bravo or to boo is the auditorium of the opera; here it is perfectly clear which person is a member of the audience, a spectator, and, in contrast, which one is a performer working for the audience; this space is the most suitable field of practice for Paul's way of thinking and acting, for his character. Mainly because its simplicity and its harmonic interval from the operatic to the social theatre this self-assured dramatic action, consisting simply of a lonely bravo or boo at first, convinces the audience in a moment, and, in exchange, the audience, following this performance after the performance, does its best to express its appreciation by either a collective burst of applause, or a chorus of boos: by these conventional ritual expressions of success and failure. Paul's art had its limits even in this relatively transparent social field though. His ability of bringing about failure could not compete with the conducting genius of Herbert von Karajan, whom he tried to fail several times, but the audience had never followed Paul in these experiments, rather contradicted him, in spite of his most authentic booing performance sprouting from his deepest antipathy towards Karajan.

II.

> [HIM:] But it was even worse if she got the part—then I had to go fearlessly *through the midst of the booing public* (and they're good judges, no matter what people say about them) and make my applause heard as a one-man claque. I attracted people's attention and sometimes stole the booing away from the actress. I'd hear people whispering beside me, "It's a valet in disguise, one of those belonging to the man who sleeps with her. Won't the rascal ever shut up?" People have no idea what could make a person do that. *They think it's stupidity; whereas it comes from a motive that excuses everything.*
>
> ME: Up to and including breaking the laws.
>
> HIM: Finally, however, I became known, and people said, "Oh, it's Rameau." My only option was to throw out some ironic expression *to salvage the ridicule of my solitary applause* so that people would interpret it as its opposite. You have to admit that it takes a *powerful interest* to brave the assembled public like that and the effort is worth more than one small écu.[2]
>
> (*italics mine* – LZ.)

Rameau is Jean-François Rameau, nephew of the famous composer and theoretician Jean-Philippe Rameau, and central character and object of Diderot's dialogue *Rameau's Nephew*. Of course, the existence connected to the name Denis Diderot is at least as central an object and character of that book as the existence connected to the name Jean-François Rameau is. This is indicated by the dialogue-form: similar to Horatian satires, the author-I talks to another person from an elevated moral position. Unlike Horatian satires, however, this position in Diderot's writing gets perverted several times, and thus becomes a bare posture, a stiffen motion in the social pantomime. The pantomime is provoked by Rameau's nephew; with his provocative unscrupulousness he forces the character Diderot into stiffen motions of character. Rameau's nephew used the title *le neveu de Rameau* as a name in real life; he even signed his letters thus. He may have had certain interests in doing so. The subtitle of *Rameau's Nephew* is

Second Satire. Second in the sense of quality and not in the sense of chronology; Diderot started to write the so-called *First Satire* later, but this latter was most probably originally intended as a simpler piece, and thus the unfinished *Rameau's Nephew* earns the subtitle *Second Satire*, meaning a satire of a higher degree. Satire does not indicate genre: the *First* takes a form of a letter, the *Second* is a dialogue. Rather satire indicates a figurative and discursive mode in which the rich etymological and hermeneutical tradition linked to the words *satura* and *satyr* also gets involved. The mottos of both Diderot-satires comes from the so-called satires of Horace, which poems Horace himself did not call so: the volume known as *Satires* was originally titled *Sermones,* meaning discussions, dialogues in verse, or rather sermons masked as dialogues. Epodes of Horace are frequently more satiric than his so-called satires. Nevertheless, both Diderot-mottos suggest a plural(istic) view, thus directing the attention towards the interpretation of satire as *satura lanx*, *bowl of varied fruits*, that is, *poem of varied themes*. The motto of Diderot's *First Satire* comes from the first poem in the second book of *Sermones*: "*Quot capitum vivunt, totidem studiorum milia*", [So many heads, / so many passions by the thousands.] The motto of Diderot's *Second Satire* comes from the seventh poem in the second book of *Sermones*: "*Vertumnis – quotquot sunt – natus iniquis*", that is "[to be] born under the evil influence of every Vertumnus". *Vertumnis* in Latin is the plural form of Vertumnus, god of seasons and change. In Rameau's context the motto suggests that he inherited all possible (bad) characteristic features. The impersistent character, and here impersistence permeates everything, could not be monotheistic, could not be monomaniac, could not be obsessed; for capriciousness that permeates everything by virtue of the Vertumnis takes metamorphosis as its natural form. *Satura* then does not simply imply varied themes but rather a primordial variability and mixedness of matter, spirit and character. No pure spirit, no pure character. The one who manifests the best this primordial and ever-present mixedness is the satyr, like Rameau. "The notions of honesty and dishonesty must be really badly confused in his head, for he shows without ostentation that nature has given him fine qualities, and has no shame in revealing that he has also received some bad ones." (RN). The satyr shows her/his socially and societally shameful characteristics, body parts and postures not merely because s/he has no feeling of chastity; s/he shows them basically because showing off is an element of her/his existence, from which s/he might

gain some pleasure as an extra, but foremostly from which s/he makes his existence and living. The satyr, the fool, or the so-called genius are channels and generators of social and societal tension; for moments such a person is able (or forced) to get outside of society via her/his uncontrolled outburst of freedom; thus, in an indirect way, their behaviour or words throw light on the weakly conditioned degree of freedom of partakers in the social drama; in their best moments, they suddenly draw the curtain, turn the lights on the scene, and thus create a spontaneous première out of a mere rehearsal. Reactions depend on the actual degree of freedom of those taking part in the current rehearsal: with the unexpected rise of the curtain some of the partakers may get stuck in their movement, some may miss their line, others might smoothly improvise on the basis of the new situation. The satyr, the fool, or the so-called genius thus becomes indispensable for a society or for an association: they are those who make a performance out of a rehearsal; and if, in a situation like this, someone happens to be in the lucky position of the observer, or–at any rate–is able to observe at all, that observer might learn elemental social and societal knowledge, and, as a member of the audience, may have fun. "If one of them appears in company, he's a grain of yeast which ferments and gives back to everyone some part of his *natural individuality*. He shakes things up. He agitates us. He makes us praise or blame. He makes the truth come out, revealing who has value. He unmasks the scoundrels. So that's the time a man with sense pays attention and sorts his world out." (*italics mine*, RN). The so-called natural individuality is also part of the social drama: it is even the most rigid part, a forced posture, an epileptic fit: the character Henri Bergson writes in *Laughter* that "in one sense it might be said that all character is comic, provided we mean by character the ready-made element in our personality, that mechanical element which resembles a piece of clockwork wound up once for all and capable of working automatically."[3] From the comical perspective the character is the individual's most rigid nucleus of social roles, which at the same time locks her-/himself up, and from which, unless having the infinite flexibility of a satyr, a fool, or a genius, s/he could not get free.

III.

Arlecchino, or Harlequin is a stock character of commedia dell'arte. The most important requirement for taking Arlecchino's role is physical agility. While usually described as stupid (or as one pretending to be stupid) and gluttonous, the character must be infinitely agile and flexible as, before anyone else, he takes responsibility for the acrobatic elements of the performance. Arlecchino is one of the *zanni* in commedia dell'arte. "Zanni is both singular and plural, the Venetian diminutive of Giovanni. [...] In Italian, it is simply the name given to any unnamed character, a person whose actual identity you cannot be bothered to discover." (67) Socially speaking, "Zanni is that regrettably eternal unfortunate, the dispossessed immigrant worker." (67) One of the zanni, Arlecchino is "a shape-shifter: he frequently adopts disguises and cross-dresses without demur" (77). In his stance, Arlecchino shares his continuously lower, close to the earth position with the zanni, but for him "this increased gravitational pull is compensated by an irrepressible upward energy in the torso: Caliban and Ariel united in the same body." (77)[4] In Diderot's satire Rameau acts as and pretends to be an Arlecchino: a stupid, gluttonous and greedy being, who–at the same time–is driven by the bare motive of satisfying his low desires, has an infinitely pliable and flexible spirit, character and body. A continuous performance is necessary to make a living. At first sight his lonely clapping in the audience seems to be rather differently motivated than Paul Wittgenstein's art of bringing about success or failure. While the latter stems from the autocracy of character and taste, from mere caprice, Rameau's confrontation with the audience is driven by a "powerful interest", "a motive that excuses everything": hunger, that is, an imperative for Rameau to hold his social position as a clown, a fool, an outsider-inside. It is his existence, it is his way to make a living. In this particular situation, he has to satisfy two contradicting demands in the same gesture. He has to make the dilettante actress, his patroness, believe that she herself is a living genius of the art of acting, and, at the same time, he has to convert the audience (consisting of people who are "good judges, no matter what people say about them") to be his pander in interpreting his one-man claque ironically: it is only a feat at a fair. He provokes the audience in order to make a living. In case freedom and spontaneity is considered as existential necessities, which they–at least on the

level of an unconscious claim–doubtlessly are, no matter whether consciously or not, they are necessary just like breathing; continued even while sleeping when one cannot pay conscious attention to breathing; in case freedom and spontaneity are necessary, then the bravoing and booing of Paul Wittgenstein is also a means to provoke the audience in order to make a living, his performance is also an existential provocation of society. His existence, however, is not built of coins and bank notes. The Wittgensteins were one of the richest families in Austria, and Paul, just like his uncle Ludwig, could hardly get rid of the "filthy" money via his regal acts of charity, his rampageous revelries, his crazy journeys and opera-tours like the one by taxi from Vienna to Paris. Rameau is usually poor, and, allegedly, he has an utmost desire to become rich, though that would mean that he should abandon his fool-existence, a basic element of his being. Rameau, analogously to Socrates' philosopher in *Phaedrus* who is not wise but a lover of wisdom, is not rich, and could never be rich, only a lover of richness. Paul Wittgenstein however, manages to break down completely, financially speaking. Both Rameau and Wittgenstein have the role of a fool as a defining social role. They were main characters in the social anecdotes of contemporary Paris, and, respectively, of contemporary Vienna. Narrator Bernhard even risks the claim that Paul was more famous in Vienna than his uncle, the world-famous philosopher. Both Rameau and Wittgenstein are conscious of their own defining roles. Basically they are not helpless lunatics, although, from time to time, Paul is transported to the asylum Steinhof, to the so-called Pavilion Ludwig, at times when his provocative behaviour becomes unbearable for his environment, or for himself. In both writings, title characters are counterbalanced from two directions: on one hand, by their famous genius uncles, on the other, by the authors as characters, Diderot-I and narrator Bernhard. The claim that counterpoints stem from the play between socially respected (famous uncles, authors as characters) and socially unacceptable (title characters) is not false but superficial. The most important common element of the two writings is precisely the problematisation of these counterpoints in order to make them sound like music. The problem is whether there is recognisable boundary between the socially outcast, unacceptable and the socially respected, celebrated; the problem is how these boundaries work like resonators which strengthen the intensity of sound, of the sound of clapping and booing too; the music of extreme counterpoints is made up by the oscillations between outcast and celebrity. The

rise and fall of stars are profane daily passion plays of our time. Comebacks are profane resurrections. In their nuclei they, nonetheless, remain mysteries, like passion plays in medieval times, and some of the former might as well be considered sacred and authentic performances, like the suicide acts of Joy Division's Ian Curtis or Nirvana's Kurt Cobain. Both of these performances were way beyond pop music postures. And these acts of suicide became an authorising stamp on the oeuvre, an inarticulate last will that empowered their music to kill, to bring about serious damage on worn-out conventions of society. No matter how music industry (labels, magazines, etc.) made money from the made-up and false posthumous pathos and legend of their deaths, especially in the case of Cobain. Market-mentality and capitalist logic itself does not touch the fact, which their acts of suicide made the most clear: that they were lost and damned and laughed at from the beginning. But they provoked fear too; both had a weak messianic power intensified in their music, which made them really dangerous and antisocial. But the role of the Messiah finally ate them up. They fulfilled this false destiny; they did not find the way to resist it. Because the proper way to resist is always beyond destiny. Rameau and Wittgenstein represent a different kind, a stronger and more self-reflected kind of social foolishness. They are not victims of their audience; they resist the compelling role of the martyr as a parody of the Redeemer. The logic of love-hate relationship between audience and performer permeates and becomes a model for all social relations in Diderot's and Bernhard's writing. The functioning of basic socio-psychological motives of idolatry and of the need to destroy idols are explainable, but the existence of the motives remain problematic. None of the two writings attempts to solve this problem, precisely because by throwing an intensive light on it, they make the problem the clearest possible. Among other reasons, that is why the position of the nephew must be indicated in the title. According to the texts, the relations between Jean-Philippe and Jean-François Rameau, and between Ludwig and Paul Wittgenstein are not merely blood-relations, but close relations of spirit too: the blood-relation between uncle and nephew is narrowed to the proverbial distance of a hair which separates the genius and the fool from each other. It is known that an organic part of Diderot's and Bernhard's authorial and public manifestations was social provocation; at their best moments, merely the manifestation of their sharp sense concerning the required high degree of freedom made it possible for them to confuse the current social play or rehearsal

going on. It is known that Thomas Bernhard was frequently termed *Nestbeschmutzer* in his own country, especially by papers like *Kronen Zeitung*. This antisocial pattern is a publicly determining factor of both authors' personalities; this threatening sign of their latent "madness" was ready to blow at any time. Their contemporaries are frequently named on their real-life names in their writings, and these contemporaries usually do not show a pleasant picture. *Le neveu de Rameau*, containing the most developed and sophisticated hosannas of defamation, was not published during the author's life though. In spite of strong defamatory tendencies, or maybe rather because of them, both authors seem to strive for impartiality and try to stick to the facts, however, both of them (and most manically Bernhard) reflect frequently on the fact that this impartiality is impossible. Satiric description is preconditioned by the observer's intellectual and moral superiority, and, though, time after time, a superior tone is discernable in Diderot's and Bernhard's discourse, this superiority becomes relativised and invalidated. The observer-speaker-narrator has only moments of independence from the universal social play going on, and, after that moment, he is an actor again, he has to take his role, he has to take a posture. Diderot's "satire" shows the social-ethical impossibility of clear, unspoiled satiric description through the figure of Diderot on stage (the character Diderot-I of the dialogue). The values of Diderot-on-stage are questioned, his rigid righteousness becomes ridiculous, he cannot be a mere observer, from time to time he is forced into a defensive position. On the other hand, the fool Rameau proves to be at least as sensitive an observer as Diderot-on-stage is. Of course, supposed values of the author Diderot get their voice; it is not mere fatalism that rules here; Palissot and his others, making fun of philosophers, certainly get their share in exchange, as gets Bertin and even "de Voltaire". But Diderot himself as Diderot-on-stage is part of the game. Everyone is charged with something, and nearly every charge is proven. The fool Wittgenstein proves to be at least as sensitive an observer as narrator Bernhard is, and none of them could ever be exhausted of making charges.

"*Da er ein unglaublich geschulter Beobachter und in dieser seiner Beobachtung, die er mit der Zeit zu einer Beobachtungskunst entwickelt hat, der Rücksichtsloseste gewesen ist, hatte er fortwährend allen Grund zur Bezichtigung. Es gab nichts, das er nicht bezichtigte.*" (WN, 98-9.) Narrator Bernhard adds to this that „*ich ja überhaupt kein größeres Vergnügen kenne, als*

Leute zu beobachten" (WN, 100); but near the end of his writing, near the end of Paul's life, mere observation (*Beobachtung*) is shown from quite another aspect of value. Character Bernhard no longer observes „people" (*Leute*) in general, he now observes his deceasing friend Paul. „*Ein paarmal habe ich ihn, ohne daß er davon eine Ahnung hatte, in der Innenstadt beobachtet, wie er nur mühselig, fortwährend darauf bedacht allerdings, seine ihm angemessene Haltung zu bewahren, an den Wänden der Grabenhäuser entlang ging, auf den Kohlmarkt und bis zur Michaelkirche und darauf noch in die Stallburggasse, tatsächlich und in dem ganz eigentlichen Sinn des Wortes nurmehr noch als der Schatten eines Menschen, vor welchem ich auf einmal Angst gehabt habe. Ich getraute mich nicht, ihn anzusprechen. Ich ertrug lieber mein schlechtes Gewissen als die Begegnung mit ihm. Ich beobachtete ihn und ging, mein schlechtes Gewissen unterdrückend, nicht auf ihn zu, ich fürchtete ihn auf einmal. Wir meiden die vom Tod Gezeichneten und auch ich hatte dieser Niedrigkeit nachgegeben. Ich mied in den letzten Monaten seines Lebens meinen Freund ganz bewußt aus dem niedrigen Selbsterhaltungstrieb, was ich mir nicht verzeihe.* (WN, 148) [...] *Ich beobachtete ihn und schämte mich gleichzeitig. Denn ich empfand es als Schande, noch nicht am Ende zu sein, während der Freund es schon war. Ich bin kein guter Charakter. Ich bin ganz einfach kein guter Mensch.* (WN, 149) [...] *Je unbarmherziger sein Verfall, desto eleganter war jetzt seine Kleidung gewesen, aber gerade diese kostbaren und gleichzeitig eleganten Stücke aus seiner Garderobe, die er von einem Jahren verstorbenen Fürsten Schwarzenberg geerbt hatte, machten den Anblick des schon beinahe ganz Ausgelebten zur Qual. Es war aber durchaus kein groteskes Bild, das er jetzt zeigte, sondern das erschütternde.* (WN, 150)"

Not merely the satiric perspective, but also the distance of the comical becomes impossible here; the observer gets too close. Observing cannot be fun any more because observing, the lack of pity is negligence in a situation like this. According to the most probable hypothesis, the character of the fool Arlecchino/ Harlequin originates from the Hellequin-character of French passion plays. In these passion plays the black-faced messenger of the devil, Hellequin, with his bunch of demons runs through the countryside chasing the damned souls of evil people to hell. The most rigid and most pregnant nucleus of Diderot's and Bernhard's public role-playing and writing is the posture, the role of Hellequin,

the Hellequin-pose. They chase to hell a considerable number of their contemporaries, even former friends, but in a way that they themselves are manifested as demonic characters; this alleged demonic characteristic saves them from falling into the ridiculous role of the moralist Pharisee; this self-demonising pattern in which their often comical and excessive self-reproach continuously counterpoints their often comical and excessive reproach of others.

IV.

Humorists rather than satirists. They could get over people's heads for brief periods only; they could suspend or forget about the continuous labour of the law of gravity for moments only; gravity in its turn pulls them off back down to earth from their god-like levitating, observing position, and now they are forced again into another posture in the never-ending universal earthly pantomime. Rameau is tempted by the possibility of heavenly undisturbed observation and judgment by Diderot-on-stage, but he refuses to give in. With this gesture author Diderot himself seems to refuse to give in for this temptation. "ME: So there you are, too, if I can use your expression or rather Montaigne's, perched on the epicycle of Mercury, contemplating the different pantomimes of the human species.

HIM: No, no I'm telling you. I'm too heavy to raise myself so high. Those misty regions I leave to the cranes. I move around from one piece of earth to another. I look around me, and I take up my positions, or I amuse myself with positions which I have derived from others. I'm an excellent mimic, as you're going to see." (RN) The law of gravity is impartial, it makes no exceptions: one should bear in mind this in order to be impartial, or at least in order to be able to strive for an impartiality that could never be realised perfectly. It is not possible to elevate over postures permanently; it is only possible to be conscious about my own positions and those of others. My own posture, my stiffen motion of character, my routine reaction can only be made conscious in retrospect, when I am already free from the fit; under the rule of the fit I am helpless like an epileptic. Diderot-on-stage of course, could not give up the ideal of the philosopher, of a "creature who can do without pantomime". Although "whoever

needs someone else is a beggar and takes up a position", and "what you [that is, Rameau – LZ] call the pantomime of beggars is what makes the earth go round", and there is no exception for this, even not for a king; however, the philosopher Diogenes "who has nothing and who demands nothing" is not a beggar because he "mocked his needs" and thus no one calls the tune for him, he has his own tune to whistle. But the form of the dialogue implies that Diderot-on-stage himself is positioned, his values, among them his ideal of the philosopher (himself), are at stake in the game of the dialogue where there is no guarantee for profit. It is not certain that he is the one to laugh last, to laugh best. Rameau says to Diderot-I: "I think you're making fun of me, Mister Philosopher. You don't know who you're playing with. You don't suspect that at this moment I represent the most important party in the town and at court." (RN) It is the dangerous possibility hidden in satire (as it is in irony) that it turns against the satirist through the accepted and prestigious public opinion, no matter how evidently stupid this public opinion may be. Then it is the satyr's turn to laugh. Satirist now falls to a lower, that is, more defenceless position than the position of the satyr, because the former is always interested in winning. That's why he plays more carefully; he tries to remain invulnerable, as Jorge Luis Borges puts it in his essay "The Art of Insult". Borges later modifies his claim: he says that the satirist's carefulness is identical with the carefulness of the card-sharper who knows which cards he should combine in order to create a pseudo-figure. The careful satirist knows that any socially effective insult is built on conventions and prejudices. Doctors are charlatans, lawyers are corrupt, politicians are criminals. These are the sure cards; all of them nicked a bit. The art of satire consists in playing out these socially nicked cards at the right moment, in the right way, and with the greatest self-evidence. Nicked cards are not always untrue; the chance to play them out does not depend on their truth, but on their unspoken self-evident character, on the quiet consensus, the silent gesture of social panderism. The satirist is a social card-sharper after all who pretends to be outside or above the social game of cards, but he is in it more than anyone else with his passionate desire for winning. Satire is the most sophisticated and most reflected passion for gambling. Diderot-on-stage (Diderot-in-the-game) opposes the satyr's gluttonous *libertinage* not with the satirist's addiction to insulting and winning but with the undemanding freedom of the philosopher. During the dialogue Diderot-on-stage, while praising the idealistic philosopher, manifests the sophist who is laughed at,

the parody of the philosopher, the object of ridicule; his own character counterpoints his own ideal. The philosopher-laughed-at is the hypocrite. Philosopher-costume does not suit the philosopher-laughed-at; the monk's cowl is too loose: it becomes a fool's masquerade.

"Why else do we so often see devout people so hard, so angry, so unsociable? It's because they've imposed on themselves a task which isn't natural to them. They suffer, and when one suffers, one makes others suffer" (RN) – says Rameau.

The philosopher-laughed-at, the hypocrite could not laugh freely because he is prevented from laughing by a stiffen motion of character, by an externally imposed moral fit. Diderot-on-stage describes his own conditions while observing Rameau thus:

"I listened to him. While he was acting out the scene of the procurer and the young girl being seduced, I was pulled in two opposite directions—I didn't know whether to give in to my desire to laugh or get carried away with anger. I was perplexed." (RN)

Narrator Diderot writes in the introductory lines that while he was sitting on his customary bench he let his thoughts the greatest *libertinage* possible; he says:

"*Mes pensées, ce sont mes catins.* [For me, my thoughts are my prostitutes.]" (RN) He shows off these thoughts. He pays for these thoughts in exchange of their pleasure. In public life free thoughts are prostitutes, that is, published thoughts are prostitutes, publication is a means of prostitution, the prostitution of one's own head. The author of *Le neveu de Rameau* is at least as much a satyr as he is a satirist. A humorist rather than a philosopher.

V.

In the text *Wittgensteins Neffe* two prize-giving ceremonies become the most intensive and most explosive kind of scenes in the social drama. Both prizes was given to character Bernhard: he receives the Grillparzer Prize from the Austrian

Academy of Sciences, and, later on, the so-called "*Staatspreis*" from the Austrian State. Character Bernhard could not be mere observer during these ceremonies, he has to take his role, and, in accordance with social custom, this role would be the leading role. However, in the Academy he seems more like an insignificant extra, in the audience hall of the Ministry he acts like an actor falling out of his role. It seems that prize-giving ceremonies would work much better without the prize-winner's presence after all. His friend Paul escorts character Bernhard to both ceremonies; according to narrator Bernhard the description of these ceremonies in the book are meant to demonstrate Paul's strength of character and presence of mind. Paul is the one in these situations who is able to see them as they are: as plays, as rituals; and thus he is able to value them and react to them in a suitable way. He clearly feels that his existence remains untouched by these ceremonies, no matter how he reacts, and thus his freedom to react remains untouched; he stays intellectually independent. During the Grillparzer Prize Ceremony he intervenes: he bursts into a loud and lonely laughter. Bergson writes in *Laughter* that "the comic comes into being just when society and the individual, freed from the worry of self-preservation, begin to regard themselves as works of art." (HB) Later, when he speaks about social ceremonies, he claims: "The ceremonial side of social life must, therefore, always include a latent comic element, which is only waiting for an opportunity to burst into full view. It might be said that ceremonies are to the social body what clothing is to the individual body: they owe their seriousness to the fact that they are identified, in our minds, with the serious object with which custom associates them, and when we isolate them in imagination, they forthwith lose their seriousness. For any ceremony, then, to become comic, it is enough that our attention be fixed on the ceremonial element in it, and that we neglect its matter, as philosophers say, and think only of its form. Everyone knows how easily the comic spirit exercises its ingenuity on social actions of a stereotyped nature, from an ordinary prize-distribution to the solemn sitting of a court of justice. Any form or formula is a ready-made frame into which the comic element may be fitted." (HB) The comic is the mere form without content, or, to be more precise, a form in which we imagined content previously; we thought about this suit that it contains a human being, and now we see that it won't move, now we realise that it hangs on a dummy. Bergson, in this context at least, does not think through that when I separate form from its content, I–in that very moment–could not help filling it with another

content, as form and content are correlational concepts, none of them having any sense without the other. And this is not mere sophism. Bergson does not problematise the "social body" because in his essay the relationship between mechanic and organic, between the rigid seriality of the machine and the continuous motion of the living body is itself conceived as rigid and static counterpoints. The description of the Grillparzer Prize-giving Ceremony is introduced by the buying of the suitable suit. "*Der neue Anzug war grauschwarz und ich dachte, in diesem neuen grauschwarzen Anzug werde ich meine Rolle in der Akademie der Wissenschaften besser spielen können, als in meinem alten.*" (WN 106.) It turns out soon that the suit is tight. According to character Bernhard it is the result of the mistake he makes time and time again, the one he should never make again: to buy a suit before the eyes of others. Changing the suit uncovers the body for a moment, and then again re-covers it into a tighter space, analogously, the podium of the social ceremony becomes a narrow cage for the character. Character Bernhard is not received, even not recognised at the Academy, then, after he has taken a seat among the audience, he is arrogantly ordered to join the Minister on the podium and out of sheer defiance he joins the social game of ranks and positions: he insists that the President of the Academy of Sciences should personally ask him to join the others on the podium. With this reaction character Bernhard has already taken up his position. This time the suit is not loose but too tight. "*Ich selbst hatte mich in den Käfig gesperrt. Ich selbst hatte mir die Akademie der Wissenschaften zum Käfig gemacht. Es gab keinen Ausweg. Schließlich war der Präsident der Akademie zu mir gekommen und ich bin mit dem Präsidenten der Akademie bis vor das Podium gegangen und habe mich neben die Ministerin gesetzt. In dem Augenblick, in welchem ich mich neben die Ministerin gesetzt habe, hat sich mein Freund Paul nicht beherrschen können und ist in ein den ganzen Saal erschütterndes Lachen ausgebrochen, das solange gedauert hat, bis die philharmonischen Kammerspieler zu spielen angefangen haben.*" (WN, 112). After leaving the Academy in anger character Bernhard returns to the Kohlmarkt where he bought his suit, complains about its being tight, and asks for another suit. With the repetition of the changing of the suit the comic aspect becomes obvious for him at last: he imagines that in a few minutes another body will run to and fro along the streets of Vienna in the suit he just put down; the same suit in which he was humiliated at the Academy will be filled with another miserable content. The other prize-giving ceremony in the

audience hall of the Ministry turns into a scandal. Following the so-called laudatio of the Minister, "*der dumme Mensch aus der Steiermark*", in which he spoke nothing but nonsense (*Unsinn*), character Bernhard, in his turn of podium speech, in "*eine kleine philosophischen Abschweifung*" animates the Minister to such an extent that this latter punches character Bernhard in the face, then leaves in outrage, shutting the glass door after himself and thus shattering it to pieces, producing a nice theatrical finale for the ceremony. The question is how the audience reacts, how they use the opportunity: it is their turn to act now. "*Einen Augenblick herrschte, wie gesagt wird,* vollkommene Ruhe. *Darauf geschah das Merkwürdige: die ganze Gesellschaft, die ich doch nur als Opportunistenmeute bezeichnen kann, ist dem Minister nachgerannt, nicht ohne vorher noch gegen mich vorzugehen nicht nur mit Schimpfwörtern, sondern auch mit geballten Fäusten, ich erinnere mich genau an die geballte Fäuste, die der Präsident des Kunstsenats, Herr Henz, mir entgegengeschleudert hat, wie an alle anderen gegen mich vorgebrachten* Ehrenbezeigungen *in diesem Augenblick. [...] Keiner war bei mir und meinem Lebensmenschen geblieben, alle waren sie, an dem für sie aufgestellten Buffet vorbei, hinausgestürzt und dem Minister nach und hinunter – bis auf Paul. Er war der einzige, der bei mir und meiner Lebensgefährtin, meinem* Lebensmenschen, *stehengeblieben war, entsetzt und amüsiert gleichzeitig von dem Zwischenfall.*" (WN, 116-7.) Paul's laughter suits his customary role of audience- and performance-provocateur, but it gets a new aspect at the Academy: it is turned against a social ceremony. There is nothing provocative in his refusal to join the "opportunist bunch" though. He rather joins his friend, and they amuse themselves on the *Zwischenfall*. This is a natural gesture of partaking, in contrast with observation.

[1] Thomas Bernhard, *Wittgensteins Neffe. Eine Freundschaft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982. (WN from now on.) pp. 45-6.

[2] http://records.viu.ca/~Johnstoi/diderot/rameau_E.htm Online version in Ian Johnston's translation. (RN from now on.)

[3] Henri Bergson, *Laughter. An Essay ont he Meaning of Comic*. Authorised Translation by Cloudesley Brereton L. es L. (Paris), M.A. (Cantab) and Fred Rothwell b.a. (London). Online version: http://www.authorama.com/laughter-1.html (HB from now on.)

[4] John Rudlin, *Commedia Dell'arte. An Actor's Handbook*. Routledge, 1994. See http://books.google.com/books?id=PIXRy1G8bHcC&dq=commedia+dell'arte&printsec=frontcover&source=in&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=12&ct=result#PPP1,M1

La binarité et la littérature dite mineure

Flóra Kovács

Cette étude se propose de s'interroger sur les attributs de la binarité en s'appuyant d'une part sur quelques écrivains de la littérature mineure, dans le domaine québecois sur l'œuvre de Roch Carrier, de Michel Tremblay et de Marcel Dubé, ainsi que sur un roman de langue anglaise d'Esi Edugyan et, d'autre part, sur les œuvres d'une jeune écrivaine Hongro-moldave (csango), de Laura Iancu.

I. La binarité dans les œuvres de Carrier, de Tremblay, de Dubé et d'Esi Edugyan

A vouloir comprendre la nature des binarités produites par Carrier, Tremblay, Dubé et Edugyan, nous nous reporterons aux idées de Michel Foucault concernant la binarité, et aux écrits de Georges Banu qui appliquent la pensée foucaldienne de l'acte de « surveiller » à la théorie du théâtre.

Dans un entretien, Michel Foucault résume parfaitement ce dont il s'occupait en premier lieu au cours de ses recherches:

> « What are the relationships we have to others through those strange strategies and power relationships? »[1]

Cette phrase reprend le schéma fréquemment utilisé par les auteurs canadiens mentionnés plus haut lesquels cherchent à souligner à plusieurs reprises la séparation de deux êtres, en donnant à l'un un attribut présumé négatif, ou du moins étrange. Insistant sur l'opposition entre les Canadiens Français et les Canadiens Anglais, Roch Carrier fait également usage de ce schéma dans *La guerre, yes sir!*[2]. Le conflit le plus important se déclare entre les Canadiens français et les (Canadiens) anglais. Selon les Canadiens français, les (Canadiens) Anglais méprisent les Canadiens français (et les autres nations) et peuvent facilement les sacrifier dans une guerre qui n'est pas celle des Canadiens français, mais celle des Anglais. Les Canadiens français n'ont d'autre choix que de se faire esclaves des Anglais ou de mourir dans leur guerre [« On voit par là

que les maudits Anglais ont l'habitude d'avoir des nègres ou des Canadiens français pour fermer leurs portes. »[3]; « Et quand les Anglais font une guerre, ils viennent chercher les Canadiens français. »[4]].

Aussi les personnages (Canadiens) anglais justifient-ils ces pensées des Français [« Quand les Anglais étaient arrivés dans la colonie, les French Canadians étaient moins civilisés que les Sauvages. »[5]]. Ce mépris s'ajoute aux contes de leur enfance et à ce qu'ils ont entendu dire à l'école [« Ses subalternes se souvenaient de ce qu'ils avaient appris à l'école. »[6]]. Les Anglais privent les Français de la possession d'attributs positifs. C'est Molly (la femme du premier rôle) qui fait l'exception pour Corriveau (un mort) et Bérubé (son mari), cependant elle pense qu'« Il [Corriveau] n'avait pas dû être très heureux puisqu'il était né French Canadian »[7]. En outre, bien que les Anglais ne le disent pas, ils dédaignent la langue française. Par cet acte, la plus grande injure est réalisée aux yeux d'un Canadien français, puisque pour les Canadiens français, la langue maternelle fait partie de l'identité.

Dans *La guerre, yes sir!*, Carrier s'appuie sur l'opposition dans toutes les unités thématiques, notamment dans la problématique de minorité-majorité, dans celle de la compréhension des langues, dans celle de la disposition de l'endroit se rattachant à la question de *dehors* et de *dedans* et dans celle des rites où il se sert de la classification des attributs de la Terre et du Ciel.

Tout comme Carrier qui fait *surveiller* les (Canadiens) Anglais par les Canadiens français et les Canadiens français par les (Canadiens) Anglais dans la maison Corriveau, Michel Tremblay dans *Le vrai monde?*[8] applique également l'acte de *surveiller*. Mais l'acte de surveiller placé dans un milieu familial devient en même temps un acte de *veiller*[9] dans la mesure où Claude, le frère, doit veiller à sa sœur, Mariette, puisque leur père, Alex, porte un désir sexuel pour sa propre fille. Par conséquent Claude surveille son père. Si l'acte de *surveiller* se réalise, c'est pour rassembler les informations que Claude peut utiliser dans l'avenir et dans son drame, ou encore pour pouvoir tenir le père à l'œil de telle sorte que celui-là ne puisse pas l'apercevoir (comme dans le *p*anopticum de Bentham). Claude recourt à l'acte de surveiller et à celui de veiller dans le cas de sa relation avec sa mère, Madeleine. Les informations sur la vie des parents ainsi rassemblées cherchent à défendre la mère. En somme, ce n'est qu'Alex qui n'est pas veillé, à savoir c'est lui qui se trouve en dehors de ce groupe dit familial, et comme tel considéré comme étranger. Une lecture psychanalytique serait à même de nuancer d'autres partages à l'intérieur de cette

famille. Ainsi d'un côté la fille et le père, tous les deux représentent le désir sexuel, de l'autre la mère et le fils qui forment leur couple s'avèrent sensible à l'acte de surveiller. Ils réalisent la surveillance étroite telle qu'elle apparaît chez Carlo Goldoni.[10]

Le vrai monde ? comprend également des attributs de l'opposition concernant le langage littéraire qui se greffe ici sur l'acte de surveiller. Ces attributs se manifestent dans l'opposition de la conception littéraire du père et du fils. Ecrivain, Claude possède un langage littéraire, une signature, qui est différente de celle des Autres, et qui n'appartient qu'à lui. Quoique Alex ne soit pas un homme de lettres, il est d'avis que les productions littéraires de son fils, ainsi que les écrits de la « jeune génération » littéraire à tout prendre, ne peuvent pas détenir les attributs de la production littéraire.

> « En tout cas, si c'est de la poésie, garde-la pour toi... J'ai assez d'entendre les maudits gratteux de guitares dans tou'es hôtels d'la province ousque j'passe... Que c'est qu'y vous prend toutes de vous mettre à gratter de la guitare de même, donc, tout d'un coup »[11]

Nous nous demandons si Alex connaît beaucoup de textes littéraires de cette génération. S'il en lisait quelques-uns, il suivrait le chemin de Claude et de Madeleine à l'égard de la surveillance, ce qui fait qu'il ne rassemblerait pas seulement les informations du nouveau langage littéraire, mais encore il interprèterait ces œuvres.[12]

Aussi un autre drame québecois, *L'été s'appelle Julie* de Marcel Dubé[13], problématise-il l'acte d'écrire dans la mesure où la question de la nature de cet acte se pose dans le cas d'un écrivain qui n'est capable d'écrire qu'à l'aide d'une sténodactylographe comprenant tous les attributs de son métier, contrairement à l'écrivain. Ce dernier applique le problème de *digression* à la conversation des rôles du drame, en faisant allusion, de manière humoristique, au village natal de Julie, à Penouille. Le champ sémantique du mot *digression* mène bien à celui de l'*altérité*. « N'écrivant pas » à Montréal, Ludovic (écrivain) parle comme si l'origine de Penouille, d'un village signifiait l'écart par rapport au mètre-étalon, comme si le mètre-étalon était l'*Homme-blanc-habitant des villes-parlant la langue française*. Dans ce cas-là, nous ne voudrions pas renvoyer à la problématique de minorité-majorité prise dans son sens social et politique, mais

bien au phénomène de l'opposition qui se renforce avec l'entrée sur la scène d'Hélène. Hélène, cette antiféministe, a beau s'opposer aux féministes et souligner son antipathie pour elles, car vers la fin du drame, elle se porte comme elles: elle choisit sa boutique, et non pas la cohabitation avec l'homme. Quoique le personnage de cette femme accentue le fait de la contradiction, il applique, à sa manière de penser, l'opération logique du complément. En exposant la relation de deux sexes, Hélène ajoute:

> « HELENE– L'égalité c'est ... la différence »[14]
>
> « HELENE – C'est par leur humanité différente qu'ils sont égaux »[15]

C'est par leur différence que les deux sexes deviennent alors égaux. La différence s'alimente de l'écart du mètre-étalon de deux sexes. L'un des éléments du mètre-étalon des hommes est *l'homme*, alors que celui des femmes est *la femme*. Il en résulte la différence mentionnée plus haut.

Dans son drame, Marcel Dubé met en relief de même l'écart au niveau de la composition dramatique, autrement dit, il marque l'écart à la tradition de la composition dramatique française. En mélangeant les attributs des drames de Tennessee Williams, ceux de Henrik Ibsen concernant la relation entre l'homme et la femme et les éléments des drames d'Anton Tchekov renvoyant vers la vie provinciale dans son œuvre, il ne fait pas allusion aux drames français. Une absence se produit ainsi, laquelle est représentée comme si elle était l'opposition.

Étudions encore une œuvre littéraire, *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* d'Esi Edugyan[16], dans laquelle la binarité et l'opposition constituent le centre de préoccupation sous forme de la problématique de minorité-majorité. C'est la représentation de deux filles (folles) qui nous montre au mieux la binarité dans la mesure où cette représentation-ci imite la réponse de la société à la folie. Dans la théorie de Foucault, la binarité n'a pas de raison d'exister car elle comprend la fausseté. Celle-ci apparaît lorsque la société empêche la folie de s'exprimer à la première personne.[17] Chez Edugyan, les folles parlent aux parents, à la copine et aux habitants de la ville en langue de leur communauté, mais quand elles veulent parler les unes aux autres, elles font usage d'une langue créée par elles-mêmes, d'une sorte de langage secret, qui ne peut être décodée que par elles-mêmes. Ainsi non seulement elles s'opposent à la société, mais la société les exclut aussi en les enfermant dans un hôpital psychiatrique après qu'elles ont mis le feu à une

maison, comme il est à présumer.[18] C'est le seul moyen qui permet à la société de les séparer de la communauté des « raisonnables ».

Après avoir passé en revue les œuvres littéraires de Roch Carrier, de Michel Tremblay, de Marcel Dubé et d'Esi Edugyan, nous pouvons constater que la binarité et l'opposition y apparaissent, de même, elles sont les traits les plus accentués. Ces auteurs canadiens effectuent « l'intrigue » de telle manière que la binarité et l'opposition viennent de l'être mineur, ou tout au moins, ces écrivains attachent ces deux phénomènes à l'être mineur.

II. Binarité autrement

Dans cette deuxième partie de l'étude, nous tentons de présenter les œuvres de Laura Iancu dans lesquelles la binarité, l'opposition et leur aspect social et politique ne jouent pas le rôle central, quoique Iancu, l'écrivaine Hongro-moldave[19], vive (ou vécut) dans une minorité ethnique. C'est l'être *déplacé* dans l'espace et le temps qui la préoccupe. De là vient que Iancu indique une perception particulière de l'espace et du temps.

II. 1. L'espace

Iancu ne souligne aucune opposition avec l'étranger, mais bien elle met en relief l'être *déplacé* du *je lyrique*[20]. Pour le faire, elle utilise le folklore de sa terre natale, en l'occurence le motif de l'oiseau. Nous savons que le folklore des Hongro-moldaves recourt fréquemment à ce motif, à savoir au motif de l'hirondelle, pour évoquer le déplacement et le retour. Iancu mêle les éléments de la tradition, le motif de l'hirondelle, à l'être *déplacé* du *je lyrique* de telle façon que le *je lyrique* prend les attributs de l'hirondelle. Dans le poème *Mi már* [Nous, ne plus][21], elle le réalise de telle sorte qu'en prêtant les traits caractéristiques de l'hirondelle au *je lyrique* et à un *nous* indéterminé, elle prive le ciel de l'attribut de l'espace infini tandis qu'elle lui donne l'attribut du limité, ou du moins l'attribut issu de l'acte de la séparation. S'y ajoute une autre interprétation: le ciel qui avait auparavant porté les signes du Dieu s'est divisé et a également pris les attributs du Diable.[22] Le *nous* doit trouver la direction dans cet espace plein d'ambiguïtés.

« Mi már csak madarak lehetünk	[Nous ne pouvons plus être qu'oiseaux
A kettészakadt ég zavarban » (*Mi már*)[23]	Dans le désordre-ciel déchiré][24]

Introduisant la nuit où les mouvements de l'acte d'écrire se font rares, le poème *Irányok* [Directions][25] souligne cette caractéristique de l'espace. Au début du poème, Iancu attribue les caractéristiques de l'hirondelle au *je lyrique* tandis qu'à la fin de l'œuvre, elle croise le *je lyrique* avec un agent écrivant.

« hová küldesz – te sem tudod	[où m'envoies-tu – tu ne sais pas, non plus
a végben nincsenek irányok	dans la fin, les directions ne l'existent pas
[...]	
ránk csukta sötétjét az éj	la nuit a fermé sa noirceur sur nous
apadnak már a sorok » (*Irányok*)	les lignes diminuent déjà]

Dans plusieurs poèmes de Iancu, le *je lyrique* (et le *nous* se rattachant à lui) se montre(nt) également comme un (/des) agent(/s) qui s'est (sont) déjà désolidarisé(s) du motif de l'hirondelle. L'écrivaine ne quitte pas entièrement ce motif dans ces poèmes non plus. Cela est visible dans *Özön lét után* [Après l'être de déluge] où les vers sur la paume peuvent signer la mort de *nous*, ainsi que le fait que le *nous* alimente l'hirondelle de la paume.[26]

« már csak a madarak	[ce ne sont plus que les oiseaux qui
szállnak	volent
tenyerünkben férgek	dans nos paumes, les vers
motoszkálnak »[27] (*Özön lét után*)	baguenaudent]

La paume, les doigts et les empreintes, les traces réalisées par ceux-là se manifestent fréquemment dans les poésies de Iancu de telle sorte que les contacts de deux différentes surfaces sont marqués. La main humaine touche à un objet ou à un autre corps humain, laisse ses empreintes, ses traces sur la surface de cet autre « objet » qui, en raison du contact, va prendre les attributs de l'homme

auparavant touché. En d'autres termes, ayant touché à une autre surface, la main humaine se reterritorialise sur elle[28], et ainsi déterritorialise l'ensemble de cet autre « objet ». Ces actes de territorialisation ne s'effacent pas car tout être humain qui touchera à l'objet ou à un autre corps humain a conscience des reterritorialisations et des déterritorialisations qui ont eu lieu sachant que l'objet ou le corps touché laisse ses traces et ses attributs sur la main qui touche. C'est la raison pour laquelle, le *je lyrique* de *Szerződés* [Contrat] peut dire:

« [...] Ezerszer érintett	[mille fois que touchait
Érintésem tenyereden	mon attouchement sur ton paume
Idegen testeket. » (*Szerződés*)[29]	les corps étrangers]

En touchant aux objets, l'être humain assure la survivance, puisque les traces vont lui survivre et pourront être intérprétées (Cf. *Alvó angyalok* [Anges dormant][30]).

De même, dans sa prose, comme dans son livre *Életfogytiglan* [A vie][31] contenant les lettres fictives, Iancu reprend pareillement l'être *déplacé* du *je* qui possède une racine qui est présentée comme si le *je* était sa tige bougeant. Le *je* ne peut pas se dépasser de sa racine qui d'une part, le protège, et de l'autre, forme ses bornes, et comme telle, elle fonctionne comme un cordon ombilical à connotations positives renvoyant à l'acte du sauvetage.[32]

Chez Iancu, le sauvetage signifie « garder les traces du passé », c'est dire que Iancu ne produit pas l'opposition au niveau du temps non plus.[33] Le *je déplacé* de la prose médite sur l'acte de laisser les empreintes. Dans la lettre de *Augusztus végén* [En fin août][34], le *je* réfléchit sur l'avenir des empreintes.

« Az ember, a nép, a kultúra otthagyja nyomát a világban, aztán eltűnik. S megy utána lassan vagy rögvest a nyoma is. De aki az árnyékát hagyja maga után, az hová tartozik? »[35]

[Les gens, l'ethnie, la culture laissent la trace au monde, puis ils disparaissent. Ensuit, leurs traces les suivent lentement ou immédiatement. Mais où appartient-t-il celui qui laisse son ombre?]

Dans ce cas-là, le *je* fait le départ de l'empreinte et de l'ombre de telle manière qu'il se figure que l'empreinte peut disparaître après un certain temps, tandis que la perte de l'ombre mène à la séparation définitive, à une crise. La disparition de l'empreinte veut dire que l'effet de la déterritorialisation est terminé, autrement dit les attributs du propriétaire des empreintes n'influencent plus, ou les empreintes des années sont emboîtées, s'imbriquent, en d'autres termes, elles ne sont plus séparables, c'est-à-dire que les attributs d'un proporiétaire ne sont plus trouvables, détectables. Pour l'ombre, d'après la tradition, elle ne peut pas être séparée de l'homme. Elle possède les attributs qui n'appartiennent qu'au propriétaire. La séparation de l'ombre signifie donc la mort ou la crise d'identité. En faisant ombre, l'individu effectue un acte de territorialisation, puisque l'ombre détenant les attributs de son propriétaire prend possession du terrain sur lequel elle tombe. Si l'individu n'avait pas d'ombre, il ne pourrait pas réaliser cet acte. Il en résulte qu'il ne pourrait pas être territorialisé par l'ombre non plus, bien que tous les hommes, et même les objets, puissent exécuter cette sorte de territorialisation. De là vient que l'acte de la territorialisation de cet individu ne se rattacherait qu'à la territorialisation par les empreintes et à la territorialisation par le son, et ainsi, ces deux actes n'assurent « la survie » de l'individu que pour de courte durée.

II. 2. Le temps

Nous avons vu que Michel Tremblay, Roch Carrier et Esi Edugyan présentent le conflit des générations. Laura Iancu ne soulève pas une opposition semblable, quoique dans *Életfogytiglan*, le *je déplacé* parle de la différence entre les modes de lire du monde. Iancu s'intéresse plutôt à une perception dans laquelle l'être *déplacé* peut être souligné.

Pour analyser la perception du temps de Iancu, nous devons éclairer la base. Cette perception du temps ne se fait pas avec une montre-bracelet, mais bien avec un sablier. Dans le sablier, la matière, les grains de sable et leur proportion ne changent point. Ce n'est que la position des grains qui varie. Le grain d'en haut parvient en bas par le renversement du sablier. Ce mouvement renforce le fait que les grains sont en « nomadisme » sans fin où il y a peu de chance que les mêmes grains se touchent à plusieurs reprises.[36] En même temps, vu que le sablier conserve, maintient les grains, l'allusion au sauvetage, qui est au cœur de l'idée de l'écrivaine,[37] peut être aperçue. A vouloir présenter cette perception du temps, Iancu recourt á un objet, au sablier, qui garde „les pièces du

temps" (c'est-à-dire les grains du temps).[38] Ainsi le temps *écoule*-t-il [telǰik] au lieu de *passer* [múlǰik]. Le champ sémantique du mot hongrois « telǰik » permet ce jeu, attendu que le hongrois peut utiliser ce mot à la fois pour exprimer qu'un contenant se remplit. et pour faire voir la marche du temps.

> « Ne hagyjuk múlni, hanem engedjük *telni* az időt. »[39]
>
> [Ne laissons pas passer le temps, mais bien permettons-lui d'*écouler*.]
>
> « A homokórák korában élő középkori emberek alázatosabbak voltak. hisz minden pillanatban látták az alápergő homokszemeket. Óráink mutatói körbejárnak, s tán be is csapnak minket. Úgy tűntetik fel az időt, mintha mindig újrakezdődne. és sohasem lenne vége. »[40]
>
> [Puisqu'ils voyaient les grains rouler dessous à chaque moment, les gens du Moyen Age. ayant vécu au temps du sablier, étaient plus humbles. Les aiguilles de nos montres tournent autour, et peut-être nous abusent-t-elles aussi. Elles font apparaître le temps comme s'il recommençait toujours, et il ne finissait jamais.]

Avec le renversement du sablier, les grains coulent d'en haut vers le bas. Au sommet du sablier, une dépression à trou se produit à travers laquelle le temps perd continuellement ses parties (du corps), c'est pour cela que dans le poème *megérkezés* [arrivée][41], le *je* considère le temps comme « déficient ».

Grâce à l'acte de renverser et à la nature du sablier renfermant les grains, Iancu recourt à l'image du roulage du temps[42] car les grains roulent les uns sur les autres dans le sablier. Comme les grains de sable ne sont pas sphériques, ils glissent les uns sur les autres, demeurent suspendus les uns aux autres. Liés à la perception du temps, ces mouvements apparaissent chez Iancu lorsque le *je déplacé* constate que les pièces du temps (c'est-à-dire les grains du temps) se rencontrent dans le patio de la famille, lui-même pris pour un sablier où mêmes les objets tiennent lieu des grains.[43]

> « Udvarunkon egymásnak estek az időegységek, s időkockák lábatlankodnak szemem előtt. Vívódnak a múlt erényei az öreg diófa alatt. »[44]
>
> [Dans notre patio, les unités de temps se jettent l'un sur l'autre et les pièces de temps font l'empressé sous mes yeux. Les vertus du passé sont rongées sous le vieux noyer.]

Nous pourrions dire que la lutte des éléments du passé pour l'existence se manifeste, mais ces éléments ne doivent pas véritablement lutter pour que leur sauvetage ait lieu. Qui plus est, après le renversement suivant, les éléments du passé deviennent des élements du présent ou de l'avenir, étant donné que les grains de sable ne changent pas. Ceci est en vue dans la lettre où la personne qui remémore peint un état fébrile[45] dans lequel elle était capable de résumer les expériences vécues dans un temps où les éléments du présent se trouvaient déjà passés, alors que ceux de l'avenir sont en retard, puisque le renversement du sablier peut produire des hiatus temporels. Attendu que les éléments du présent se manifestaient déjà auparavant et qu'ils sont ceux du passé, car le sablier garde les grains[46], le passé domine le présent et même le futur, autrement dit, nous ne pouvons parler que d'un temps appelé par Iancu le temps d'*il y a*.

A part le sablier, la montre-bracelet apparaît également dans l'œuvre de Iancu, mais elle introduit une perception à caractère négative se rattachant à l'acte de *passer* (le temps passe) et non pas à celui d'*écouler* [telik][47], tout en représentant un masque qui cache le fait qu'il n'y a qu'un temps. De là vient que le *je lyrique* ne peut s'appuyer que sur une perception ayant contact avec le sablier, et c'est pour cela que dans *Kő kövön* [Pierre sur pierre], le *je déplacé* ajoute :

« Serkenj hát — Jaillis alors
Homokszem »[48] — Grain de sable]

Nous pourrions dire que par le sablier et par le rejet de la montre-bracelet, Iancu produit une opposition entre la perception du temps propre au sablier et celle de la montre-bracelet, tout en estimant que le sablier relève du passé alors que la montre-bracelet appartient au présent, mais, comme nous avons déjà montré, elle ne sépare pas les temps, qui plus est, elle effectue une perception du temps à laquelle un seul temps, le temps d'*il y a*, convient.[49]

Dans cette étude, nous avons présenté deux différentes conceptions de la littérature mineure. Dans la conception des auteurs québecois cités, l'être mineur se rattache au phénomène de la binarité que la critique postmoderne et néocolonialiste a tendance mettre à l'épreuve. D'où les thématiques de la femme

ou de la folie. Contrairement à cette conception, Laura Iancu présente le problème de la minorité avec un sujet déplacé en lui inventant un espace et un temps particuliers.

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[1] „Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault". In *Technologies of the Self.* The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988. 15. [http://www.thefoucauldian.co.uk/techne.htm (le 24 août 2008)]

[2] Carrier, Roch: *La guerre, yes sir!* (La trilogie de l'âge sombre I.). Montréal, Stanké, 1998.

[3] Carrier: *Op. cit.*, 28.

[4] Carrier: *Op. cit.*, 110.

[5] Carrier: *Op. cit.*, 91.

[6] Carrier: *Op. cit.*, 91.

[7] Carrier: *Op. cit.*, 82.

[8] Tremblay, Michel: *Le vrai monde ?* Ottawa, Leméac, 1989.

[9] Les mots utilisés par Georges Banu. In Banu, Georges: *La scène surveillée*, Arles, Actes Sud, 2006.

[10] Cf. Banu: *Op. cit.*

[11] Tremblay: *Op. cit.* 21.

[12] Nous pourrions examiner cette problématique à l'aide de la théorie du changement de paradigme, et ainsi nous pourrions observer que Claude, détenant le nouveau langage littéraire, représente l'anomalie, tandis que son père, tenant à la littérature d'antan, se rattache au paradigme. Cf. Khun, Thomas: *La structure des révolutions scientifiques*. Trad. Laure Meyer. Paris, Flammarion, 1999.; Cf. Wellek, René — Warren, Austin: *La théorie littéraire*. Trad. de l'anglais par Jean-Pierre Audigier et Jean Gattégno. Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1971.

[13] Dubé, Marcel: *L'été s'appelle Julie*. Ottawa, Leméac, 1975.

[14] Dubé: *Op. cit.* 75.

[15] Dubé: *Op. cit.* 76.

[16] Edugyan, Esi: *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne*. Toronto, Knopf Canada, Fall, 2004.

[17] Cf. Foucault, Michel: *Surveiller et punir*. Paris, Gallimard, 1975.; Marcelli, Miroslav: *Michel Foucault, avagy mássá lenni*. Trad. Németh István. Pozsony, Kalligram, 2006. ; Lacroix, Jean: *La signification de la folie selon Michel Foucault* [http://www.girafe-info.net/jean_lacroix/foucault.htm (le 24 août 2008)].

[18] Cf. Kovács Flóra: « Viszonyítás?! De mihez? [Mise en rapport? Mais à quoi?] (Esi Edugyan: Samuel Tyne második élete) ». In *A Hét*. [http://www.ahet.ro/content/view/3598/84/ (2008. 03. 01)].

[19] En raison du caractère composite de la communauté des csangos, nous essayons d'éviter l'expression *csango* dans cette étude. Cf. Pozsony Ferenc: *A moldvai csángó magyarok* [Les csango-hongrois de Moldavie]. Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó – Európai Folklór Intézet, 2005.; Ekler Andrea: „Fél szemmel mindig az égre tekintve" [En levant toujours un œil au ciel] (Entretien avec Laura Iancu) in *Magyar Napló*. Juillet 2008. 31-37.

[20] Cf. Genette, Gérard: *Fiction et diction*. Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1991.

[21] Iancu Laura: « Mi már ». In *Karmaiból kihullajt* [Perd de ses griffes]. Budapest, Magyar Napló, 2007. 9.

[22] La thématique religieuse n'est pas étrangère pour la poésie de Iancu.

[23] Iancu: *Karmaiból kihullajt. Op. cit.* 9.

[24] Dans ce qui suit, je fais usage de mes traductions brutes.

[25] Iancu: *Karmaiból kihullajt. Op. cit.* 17.

[26] Dans le nouveau recueil de Iancu (*Karmaiból kihullajt. Op. cit.*), le motif d'oiseau est combiné à l'acte d'écrire dans le poème *egyedül* [seul] (27.) où les attributs d'oiseau sont donnés au mot („karmaiból kihullajt-e a szó", [est-ce que le mot me perd de ses griffes] 27.).

[27] Iancu: *Karmaiból kihullajt. Op. cit.* 8.

[28] V. La terminologie de Gilles Deleuze et de Félix Guattari. Deleuze, Gilles – Guattari, Félix: *Kafka — Pour une littérature mineure*, Paris, Ed. de Minuit, 1975. et Deleuze, Gilles — Guattari, Félix, *Rhizome*, Paris, Ed. de Minuit, 1976 (repris dans *Mille plateaux*, Paris, Ed. de Minuit, 1980.).

[29] Iancu: *Szerződés*. In Iancu: *Pár csángó szó* [Quelques mots csangos]. Csíkszereda, Hargita Kiadó, 2004. 49.

[30] Iancu: *Karmaiból kihullajt. Op. cit.* 16.

[31] En préparation.

[32] L'image de la racine présente la négation de l'opposition dans le poème *Nincs ellenség* [Pas d'ennemi]. In Iancu: *Karmaiból kihullajt. Op. cit.* 93.

[33] Cette problématique sera examinée dans ce qui suit.

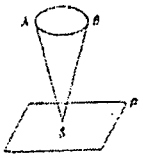
[34] Iancu: *Életfogytiglan. Op. cit.*

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Naturellement, l'aspect du nomadisme renvoie au motif de l'hirondelle.

[37] Cette caractéristique de l'idée de Iancu peut venir du fait que l'écrivaine est ethnographe. De plein droit, l'acte du sauvetage est présent dans ses deux recueils de contes, dans *Johófiú Jankó. Magyarfalusi csángó népmesék és más beszédek* [Johófiú Jankó. Les contes populaires et autres récits csangos de Magyarfalu] (*Johófiú Jankó. Magyarfalusi csángó népmesék és más beszédek.* Réd. par Benedek Katalin – Iancu Laura. Velence, Somogyhegyi Kft, 2002) et dans *Az Aranyréce. Mesék Moldvából* [Le Canard d'or. Les contes de la Moldavie] (*Az aranyréce. Mesék Moldvából.* Réd. par Iancu Laura. Budapest, Hagyományok Háza, 2005.), ainsi que dans sa monographie de photographies, dans *Magyarfalusi emlékek* [Les souvenirs de Magyarfalu] (*Magyarfalusi emlékek.* Réd. par Benedek Katalin et Iancu Laura. Budapest, MTA Néprajzi Kutatóintézet, 2005.). Il semble que dans ce dernier, elle suit la pensée de Roland Barthes selon laquelle une photographie possède, parfois, un « détail » attirant le récepteur. Barthes nomme ce détail *punctum*. (Cf. Barthes, Roland: *La chambre claire*. Paris, Ed. de l'Etoile, Gallimard, Le Seuil, 1980. 71.) En discernant ce *punctum*, pour un certain nombre de photographies, Iancu l'extrait dans un autre cadre à côté de la photographie (V. *Magyarfalusi emlékek. Op. cit.* 11., 19., 20., 23., 25., 28., 29., 67., 101., 107., 124., 129., 131., 135., 136., 137., 140., 148., 158., 159., 174., 177.). (Dans quelques cas, le choix de ces *ponctum*s donnés se rattache à l'être ethnographe de Iancu.)

[38] Ce sont deux cônes mis sens dessus dessous qui répondent au sablier dans l'espace. Suivant la figure d'Henri Bergson où AB constitue la base, et le sommet S démontre mon présent et „touche le plan mobile P de ma représentation" (Bergson, 91.), nous pouvons constater que c'est dans le point S que le grain roulé prend un nouveau attribut.



Cf.: „c'est du présent que part l'appel auquel le souvenir répond, et c'est aux éléments sensori-moteurs de l'action présente que le souvenir emprunte la chaleur qui donne la vie." In Bergson, Henri: *Matière et mémoire*. http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/bergson_henri/matiere_et_memoire/matiere_et_memoire.pdf

[39] Iancu: « A levélírás elviselhetetlen könnyűségéről » [L'Insoutenable Légèreté de la correspondance]. In Iancu: *Életfogytiglan. Op. cit.*

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] Iancu: *Karmaiból kihullajt. Op. cit.* 26.

[42] Cf. Iancu: « Ember-oltár » [Autel d'homme] et « Az emberiség fényes éjszakája » [Nuit luisante de l'humanité]. In Iancu: *Életfogytiglan. Op. cit.*

[43] Dans le poème *megérkezés*, même le *je lyrique* devient un grain. Iancu: *Karmaiból kihullajt. Op. cit.* 26.

[44] Cf. Iancu: « Itt van a szép, az eredet » [Voilà la belle, la genèse]. In Iancu: *Életfogytiglan. Op. cit.*

[45] Cf. Iancu: « Októberi várakozás » [Attente d'octobre]. In Iancu: *Életfogytiglan. Op. cit.*

[46] Nous n'étudions pas le cas où un trou se trouve sur le mur du sablier. Nous pouvons supposer que ce cas causerait l'intemporalité.

[47] V. cette question plus haut.

[48] Iancu: *Pár csángó szó. Op. cit.* 27.

[49] Naturellement, nous pourrions analyser plus minutieusement la perception du temps de Iancu, mais dans cette étude, nous n'avons étudié que la non-réalisation de la binarité chez elle.

The Language Switch of István Domonkos. Translation as a Metaphor of Being

Roland Orcsik

Traditionally, translation was conceived as a bridge linking cultures to each other; we attributed a mediating role to it. It may be imagined, however, that we shall never meet the other on this bridge, on the contrary: differences become more sharpened. Naturally, we may ask whether the strangeness we perceived in the other is our own strangeness at the same time. In some points we are strangers in the eyes of the other. And thus we are familiar: being a stranger does not seem strange to the other. From this point what becomes exciting is what have not been and could not be translated: that which remains intangible like a shadow. A translation becomes credible when it throws light on that shadow which in turn fades away with the arrival of light. We should then explore our way through darkness with a flashlight:

Translation As Culture, Culture As Translation

Referring to Walter Benjamin, Homi K. Bhabha speaks about the strangeness, foreignness of translation: "With the concept of 'foreignness' Benjamin comes closest to describing the performativity of translation as the staging of cultural difference."[1] Our question concerns the same problem: whether the translating practice of the authors of *New Symposion*, especially of István Domonkos defined or rather removed cultural differences? Generally speaking: is translation itself a definition or rather a removal of cultural differences?

The periodical of Hungarian writers living in Serbia named *New Symposion* (1965-1992) had published translated works from its very beginning. They already published translated works in the pre-form of the periodical when it was a supplement of another Vojvodinian magazine *Ifjúság* (*Youth*). Thus translation was a definitive characteristic of the Hungarian group of authors in Novi Sad; showing not only the reception of world literature but also their own poetical tendencies. According to Itamar Even-Zohar translation is the most active system of literary polysystems. It is activated when either the literary

polysystem is not built out yet or it is "peripheral", "weak", or when turning points, crises or literary vacuums occur in literature.[2] For the *New Symposion* all three attributes was given.

Even before the periodical appeared on the scene, Vojvodinian Hungarian literature had been still unformed and had not had its sharp face. This problem is already highlighted by Kornél Szenteleky before World War II, in 1932: "The atmosphere of the land, the special nature of our problems inhabits at last the souls of our poets, nevertheless we are still far from forming a permanent characteristic from the coleur local that appears now and then. [...] So true Vojvodinian literature is still in travail before birth, up to now we have only had literature in Vojvodina."[3] In the sixties Symposion-authors faced this condition of travail too. The second case in Even-Zohar's taxonomy is labelled "peripheral" and "weak"; *New Symposion*'s position was doubtlessly peripheral: it could not have joined the Hungarian literary centre due to political reasons and it also had a marginal position among contemporary Yugoslavian literatures. And as there was no tradition for the authors of the periodical to which they could have linked themselves, they started to experiment, to search for their own form instead of writing „rural" or „anecdotal" literature. *New Symposion*'s discourse was formed in the intersection of several cultural traditions. Although we could–in this discourse–feel the influence of its environment, it has nevertheless managed to fill the vacuum of Vojvodinian Hungarian literature with a characteristic content. About peripheral literatures Even-Zohar claims that these tend to adopt the forms of external literatures, and for them translation is not merely an important channel of fashionable world literature but also the source of great transformations and new alternatives replacing the old system.[4] In the case of New Symposion "external literature" means ex-Yugoslavian (Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Bosnian, Macedonian etc.) literatures and cultures. Meanwhile, ongoing translations produced a new language, translators created their own world which have succeeded the old out of date system (the perspective of "rural" Vojvodinian Hungarian literature). Writer and artist György B. Szabó, late teacher at the Hungarian Department of Novi Sad and (with Ervin Sinkó) an intellectual mentor of the *Symposion* authors said rightly: "What we can never spare for ourselves in the work of the translator is the courage and power to create a language; the ability to develop language and to make it grow. You need

not be a translator to recognise our linguistic backwardness: it is enough to experience interactions of bilingualism in a direct way. We should care much more about our language; we should develop it and make it able to express new contents, new meanings and new connections; we should keep the necessity of linguistic effort awake."[5] The name of the periodical *New Symposion* already shows the claim to this "new" cultural image; and after analysing the elaborated discourse of the magazine we could say: the claim was not without result.

Difficulties of approaching space

When we open the early volumes of the periodical, we may notice that its translatory activity functioned not at all in the name of communist "fraternity-unity". Though they produced translated works of left side authors, all of these authors turned with critique towards contemporary social atmosphere and problems; they wrote experimental and existentialist literature in spite of socialist realism propagating war; and they frequently referred to other artistic media like film, music or fine arts (cf. the work of Miroslav Krleža, Radomir Konstantinović, Antun Šoljan, Ivan Slamnig, Slobodan Tišma, Slavko Bogdanović, Miroslav Mandić, Vojislav Despotov, Vladimir Kopicl). Nevertheless, we cannot say without hesitation that this literary discourse was born in the name of multiculturalism, especially if we take the term in its normative function. The term was not in use in the discourse of the '60s, '70s or '80s Yugoslavia; it was not mentioned on the lines of the periodical either. In retrospect we could of course discover traits which make us define the literary discourse of *New Symposion* as multicultural. But we would get into controversies soon. One of the periodical's interpreters, Zoltán Virág surely gets into one of those when he says in his volume on István Brasnyó that symposionist authors all "approached questions of polyglot texts and multiculturalism with surprisingly similar intellectual conceptions"[6]. In a later study he corrects himself (by alluding to Slavoj Žižek) and considers multiculturalism the inverse form of racism which fact was realised by the "most prominent symposionists" [7]. The Voivodinian intercultural situation of the period is also labelled multicultural by the Serbian Miško Šuvaković: "It is important to realise that the interest of Voivodinian authors in the problems of text and

textuality is a product of Voivodina's characteristic historical and **multicultural** situation where language is not a mark of natural identity, rather the artistic trace of performing speech through sign and sign through speech."[8] In case we use here multiculturalism as a descriptive term then the cited passages are adequate: the cultural map of Voivodina is drawn by nations living in the closest proximity. The use of the concept becomes complicated though when it is meant in its current meaning as it has developed in Western democracies, and it is applied on a different cultural field. A one time symposionist Alpár Losoncz calls late Yugoslavian intercultural politics "multiculturalism directed from above". He writes: "In retrospect we could see that the speciality of the Yugoslavian constellation is secured by the fact of the period-making failure of an ideologically inspired hypernational programme. It brings to surface the fact of lack of understanding between ethnic groups, the violent solutions of interpretive conflicts, the intensifying misunderstandings under the ideological cover, and the process of pseudo-dialogue working under the banner of ideological multiculturalism directed from above."[9] "Multiculturalism directed from above" means here the central definitive point of the common life space of ex-Yugoslavian nations. According to Will Kymlicka minority politics of Eastern European countries is characterised by the principle of security: "Their aim is to make sure that minorities could not get into such a position from where they would be able to threaten the territorial integrity and the very being of the state"[10]. It seems that Losoncz borrows the conception of Kymlicka about the principle of justice working in Western European minority politics when he claims in his cited study that "The ideals of Western multiculturalism may be fruitful in Middle and Eastern Europe only if the ethnic groups of the region have the necessary receptive and innovative tendencies."[11] This shows that in late Yugoslavia it was not that ideal of multiculturalism at work which is characteristic of Western democracies. Meanwhile, it is questionable whether imported ideas from the "West" can be applied to the Balkan. According to István Fried, "though the interactive exchange relations of the Balkan with Central European polyculturalism cannot be reduced to a surface level, they also cannot reach the deep structure of culture."[12] To this Fried adds that „the way (fashionable) western ideas are articulated in the Balkan stems from the debates of polyculturalisms."[13] So while investigating the Balkan we should not leave out the historical and cultural problems of the region. The phenomenon of *New*

Symposion should not be detached from the questions of Balkan. Naturally, I would not say that social models of western democracies should be completely ignored in their relations to the Balkan or to the Yugoslavia of Tito. I would like to call attention rather to the perspective also referred to by Fried in his interpretations of novels by Ivo Andrić and Meša Selimović: violent democratisation of the Balkan cannot reach deep structures; it remains on the surface. Ignoring this, and following Kymlicka, Losoncz also urges a utopistic world model in the Balkan. However, we should treat the name "Balkan" itself with care before we would start to fight a phantom Balkan image. Bearing in mind the heterogeneity of cultural, religious and historical problems the statement of Beáta Thomka about cultural identity is worth of reflection: "Cultural identity is an attitude, an attribute under construction, an activity, a form of action, and an element of the relation attaching the individuum to its environment. It could act as a community-forming force among people of different ethnic roots, different religions who live in many-layered interethnical relations."[14] Thus we should not spare discussing the role of environment in the creation of the cultural identity of an individuum. And we should not spare it either when discussing *New Symposion.*

In relation to the cultural life of Voivodina in the Tito period it is also unclear which model of multiculturalism is preferred by theoreticians in favour of multiculturalism: the "melting pot" of America or the "cultural mosaic" of Canada. It is Slavoj Žižek himself (cited by Zoltán Virág without comment) who states that Western multiculturalism is the ideology of globalist politics and thus a "distance-keeper racism": "And, of course, the ideal form of ideology of this global capitalism is multiculturalism, the attitude which, from a kind of empty global position, treats *each* local culture as the colonizer treats colonized people – as 'natives' whose *mores* are to be carefully studied and 'respected'."[15] It is easy to detect the echo of Stanley Fish's critique of "boutique multiculturalism" in the Žižekean thought: even if we support multiculturalism in words, we must remain "uniculturalists", and, in the name of pluralism, would not tolerate anything which is not pluralist; consequently, according to Fish, multiculturalism simply does not exist.[16] Contemporary Sloven philosopher Dean Komel condemns "multiculturalism" as the strategy of global politics, and supports instead the concept of European interculturalism. In his phenomenological

differentiation multiculturalism is the mouthpiece of "end of history" ideology, and according to this ideology we cannot speak with the other because there is no difference: and thus we cannot speak about the Europe of many different cultures and long historical past. That is why intercultural dialogue is important: "When we speak about the need to determine intercultural sense, then we do not emphasise any culture *in* the world and its central role but rather the culture *of* the world which opens up *in its own centre as culture in speech.*"[17] Fish, Žižek and Komel criticise the critical discourse of the American intercultural situation (cf. debate of the canon). It is problematic to claim with Virág that symposionists were clear about these late interpretations. Symposionists did not interpret Western democracies or multiculturalisms, but rather their own cultural situation.

We would get a similar controversial result if we reduce the discourse of *New Symposion* to another currently fashionable term, *postcolonialism*. Among similarities we can recognise several differences. Though both discourses share the problem of cultural foreignness, we should not ignore their differences, which is the result of different geographical, historical and literary situatedness. One of the most striking differences is that postcolonial authors write primarily in postcolonial English, or, to be more precise, they write in a transformed version of the language of the colonising power (beside their own mother tongue): "One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit is one's own. [...] I use the word 'alien', yet English is not really alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up – like Sanskrit or Persian was before – but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. [...] Our method of expression therefore has to be dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colorful as the Irish or the American."[18] Authors of New Symposion, in contrast to postcolonial authors, write in Hungarian, in their mother tongue: even if their Hungarian language is not exactly alike the Hungarian of Hungary, and even if some of them tried to write in the language of the majority, of "Serbian-Croatian" culture. The language of symposionists is not a variety of the coloniser's language, but rather the (mother) tongue of the experience of "centaur-existence" shaped by the intersection of several cultures. This use of language was characterised by first-generation symposionist László Végel (contemporary of Domonkos and Tolnai) in the following way: "In each word there is a hidden

dimension on which you stare helpless; you make complex detours to avoid the impossibility of naming. Thus you become the martyr of indirectness and self-reflection. [...] It is not merely a matter of self-defence. You involuntarily become doubled by two languages, and, in return, this doubling influences your gestures in your mother tongue."[19]

Eluding the notions of multiculturalism and postcolonialism perhaps it would be more fruitful to set out from the *delta*-metaphor of Ottó Tolnai: „[...] delta is something that suits the border-situation. [...] Delta is both river and sea, but both beyond and before the river. The river is the path. Delta is the spring along the path, the recurrence of the spring, and its permanent possibility."[20] Erzsébet Csányi interprets Tolnai's metaphor in the following way: „Delta is the reservoir of the pendulum existence springing from the I and the Other, the familiar and the strange, the small and the large, the beginning and the end, the periphery and the centre, the marginal-minor and the dominant."[21] Following Tolnai Beáta Thomka names the Vojvodinian cultural context a delta space: „At another point he reflects on Vojvodina as an imaginary region where cultural, intellectual values and tendencies flood through, are received and involved. A virtual gate standing in the crossway of cultures, directions and civilisations."[22] According to Tolnai István Domonkos and the early symposionists reflect on this in-betweenness and swinging back and forth, on a condition between cultures and identities where everything is possible and nothing is permanent except for the continuous oscillation.

Tension of the other language

What is the difference between the literary language of symposionist authors and that of Hungarian authors from Hungary? It is not merely a different vocabulary that contains Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, etc. words, but also a fundamental difference of poetics that stems from the experience of the *foreign* as one's *own*. Foreign is in a close relation to the own here because the construction named Yugoslavia had rendered the ideological conditions for the coexistence of different nations: state-defining ethnic groups and nations were officially equal (the possession of leading positions show a different picture though). In other words, ideologically speaking the national identity of others did not prevent the

citizens of the state from thinking of themselves and of each other as Yugoslavians. In the meantime the literary interest of symposionists was not defined by Yugoslavian political commitments. It is discernable from the very beginning what kind of ex-Yugoslavian literary works catch their attention; mostly the works they chose to translate. So it is not barely a matter of passive reception, but rather that of active reading that produced translations among else. This translation practice was not a way to celebrate the communist regime, instead it enabled them to make the most of the intercultural situation. It allowed for joining the tendencies of world literature regarding the fact that–for instance–in those times Yugoslavian cultural atmosphere was much more open than the Hungarian one. In his comparison of the Vojvodinian Hungarian literature and the cultural atmosphere of contemporary Hungary Mihály Ilia claims that "Bori should not be eliminated from Vojvodinian Hungarian literature and not even from the whole of Hungarian literary history. What he has done to the avantgarde opened the gates for the youth of the region: it is not up to Budapest to define the canon but to our value judgements depending on our taste, on our knowledge. Besides, we should not forget that Voivodinian, or, as we put it, Yugoslavian Hungarian literature received, along the side of Serbian literature, Serbian literary orientation with great intensity. It had a considerable variety, it was very rich, and if it did not exist, Hungarian literature would have been shaped differently. [...] Everything was translated, and they reflected on it quickly. In Hungary closedness was very strong even after 1957, especially towards the West, but rather towards all directions. To the East too: the best of Russian authors had not been translated." [23] Among other things the cultural perspective of the symposionists differed in this point from provincial Vojvodinian literary circles buried in their own narrow-minded regionality where the value of a literary work is not defined by aesthetics but by origin. Symposionists widened their perspective through Southern Slavic cultures. Meanwhile, their translation practice not only manifested itself as active reception, but as a creative impulse to their own work. Hungarian and doubtlessly Southern Slavic cultural life–as influence and tradition–also contributed to the development of New Symposion.

The Hungarian language of symposionists is unimaginable without its *own foreignness*. In connection with this, once symposionist László Végel claims that "the language of a minority writer necessarily brings with itself otherness

and foreignness."[24] Texts of Ottó Tolnai, István Domonkos, Katalin Ladik, László Végel, Ottó Fenyvesi, János Sziveri and others all reflect on the problem of language loss (the original mother tongue Hungarian transforms) and on the creation of a new language that can be regarded as intercultural language (Deleuze-Guattari). In this sense *New Symposion* differentiates between the standard literary Hungarian and the intercultural symposionist language. As a result, for the authors of *New Symposion* the question of minority literature is not about preserving a national self-image in the name of survival. For them it is rather the problem of linguistic re- and deterritorialisation (Deleuze-Guattari), the philosophical and poetical conception of the experience of minority-existence and of the foreign mother tongue in the Derridean sense.

prevodi trajanja

Naturally, we cannot say that all symposionist authors showed the same attitude towards the experience of minority existence and towards cultural translation. Here I would like to highlight only one representative symposionist author: István Domonkos. He can be regarded a representative author because, as the editor of the periodical, he was present in all kinds of writing practice: he wrote poems, prose, essay, he translated from Croatian, Serbian, German and Swedish, and later his writings were translated to Serbian(Croatian).[25] He is the most characteristic artist of his generation as it is evidenced by the rich reception of his works. He voiced the experience of rhisomatic language not only in Hungarian but in the language of the *other*: it is testified by his book written in Serbian(Croatian) *prevodi trajanja* (1970). Finally, he arrived at the perfect poem of Mallarmé, at the empty sheet, at the Rimbaudean contempt of poetry, at the aesthetics of silence.

If we look at the translational practice of István Domonkos, we can see that he did not work as a missionary. Most of all he translated those works to Hungarian which were close to his own authorial poetics. From this point of view it is not by chance that mostly he translated poems (e.g. Miloš Crnjanski, Branimir Miljković, Ivan Slamnig, Slavko Mihalić, Danijel Dragojević). Similarly to the linguistic polyphony of Joyce, Beckett, Pound, Eliot, etc. Domonkos used the technique of linguistic montage; in his short stories he also

cited Southern Slavic verbal discourses (see his 1972 writing titled *Hangok [Sounds]*). In this way Domonkos's works can be linked to Central European literatures of plural language-perspective, even if, as István Fried claims: "it cannot be denied that tendencies opposing this direction had a much stronger impact in East Central Europe and in its literatures".[26]

The linguistic experimentation of Domonkos finally led to the conclusion that for him language, more precisely mother tongue is not the home of being in the Heideggerian sense, but rather its absence. This absence-poetics is the most strict and clear in his most frequently cited poem written in *Gastarbeiter*-language, *Kormányeltörésben* (1971). Here *Gasterbaiter*-language use becomes the experience of a world. Of a foreign world where words are ruins of a broken (ungrammatical) language. As Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó puts it "the »unpoetic quality« can point out that poetry could never be the mother tongue of humanity, or, perhaps more precisely, it is not the mother tongue of humanity"[27]. But this poem was preceded by the borrowing of the other language: by writing poetry in Serbian. It is difficult, as János Bányai has already emphasised, to put Domonkos's book *prevodi trajanja* into Hungarian. The Serbian(Croatian) word 'trajanja' means guarantee, duration of being, duration of time, being; while 'prevodi' means simply translations. So the book is titled "Translations of Being/ Time". The word translation refers to foreignness not merely in a metaphoric sense in this case: Domonkos's Serbian volume remained unnoticed both by Hungarian and Serbian critical reception. It is only after 29 years (first publication: *Híd* [periodical] 2000/8) that once co-editor János Bányai interprets this volume in the following words: "Serbian poems outside Serbian poetic tradition – this is the poetic distinctive feature of István Domonkos's being-translations."[28] It is a question though that in what Slavic language Domonkos wrote: in Serbian or in Serbian-Croatian? Below »Contents« at the end of the volume we can read: "the author has written his poems in Serbian-Croatian". In those times the official literary language was either Serbian-Croatian or Croatian-Serbian. If we look at them from a linguistic point of view we may say that Domonkos wrote his poems in Serbian, even if the volume's language use may sound unfamiliar to the Serbian reader because of its Hungarian-like syntax. However, if we take the contemporary context, then the volume is embedded in the ex-Yugoslavian "Serbian-Croatian" poetic tradition; regardless of Bányai's

opinion about the volume's outsider-position. This outsiderness provides the volume's foreignness-experience to which the word translation in the title has already alluded. Being in this case is the condition of continuous translation, permanently facing the impossible task, the final failure. The failure of completely knowing the other and thus ourselves. Beside the title the volume does not point directly at this epistemological and ontological failure. Perhaps the only poem which can be linked directly to failure is *i tako uvek reka nosi jedan leš...* [and so the river always carries corpses...] dedicated to Serbian avantgarde poet and writer Rastko Petrović (1898-1949) who created synthetic works in almost all isms[29]. Among other things the lyric subject speaks about the impossibility to follow Petrović's ecstasy: "*i duša... / i telo / i reči moje / i muzika ova / iz komšiluka / i ne pomaže / pratiti te / tom ek-stazom*"[30] [literally: and the soul.../ and the body / and my words / and this music / from the neighbourhood / won't help me / to follow you / into that ecstasy]. In the poem the expression "won't help me" recurs several times referring to the failure. Domonkos rewrites the 1920 poem by Petrović *O trenju između duše i tela* which denies the direct and homogeneous nameability of things; poetry can only express the intermediate condition of existence: "*To nije velika šuma koja šumori, / Ni široke poljane koje se smeju, / Tiha je reka ovo između pustih obala!*"[31] [It is not the humming of the great woods / Nor the laughing of the wide plains, / It is the silent river running between bare banks!] The title itself refers to the intermediate condition: *Of the Friction Between Soul and Body*. Though the lyric subject of Domonkos borrows the simultaneity, the associative construction, the unusual association of Petrović's avantgarde poetic speech, he–at the same time–encounters the fact that it is impossible to follow Petrović's ecstasy and belief in words.

We can draw a parallel between Domonkos's Hungarian-like syntax and the »free poetic speech« concept of Petrović that ignores grammatical rules, obeys the unconscious flow, the automatic poetic speech. Svetlana Velmar-Janković interprets the agrammatic poetic speech of Petrović in the following way: "But at moments of great poetic power Rastko Petrović was unwilling to acknowledge any sentence-pattern as he was unwilling to acknowledge any rule. He wished to realise pure rebellion through poetic speech which would be able to express a new type of consciousness: the »vigilant«." [32] According to Velmar-Janković this new type of consciousness is in connection with ecstasy: "The first

thing is that it is about the reality which consists of the ecstasy of non-reality and thus of the ecstasy of reality; the second is that this articulated part of reality must have its suitable form."[33] Writing poetry is a physical activity; a vital function for the documentation of ecstasy. To realise this Petrović constantly changed the viewpoints, the time- and space-coordinates of poetic speech, and in this way he also made reader-positions uncertain. [34]

From the perspective of Petrovićean agrammaticality Domonkos's poems are not in broken Serbian(-Croatian) but in experimental Serbian(-Croatian). Meanwhile, for him the word ecstasy is not that unequivocal, because he splits the word in two pieces: *ek-staza. Staza* means path, a way that can be followed to its end. For him this is lost though, which is already shown in the unfinished, fragmented sentences of the poem. The split of the word suggests that the word does not have one single meaning in which one can ecstatically believe. The experience of foreign existence has its open expression in the poem: "*i ne pomaže / vraćati se sam / niotkuda / i sedeti neprozvan / ni od sebe / u praznoj sobi / i prosuti seme / dovoljno / za poemu neku*" [and it won't help / if I return alone / from nowhere / and uncalled / even by myself / in the empty room / and spread away the seeds / that are enough / for a poem]. One lesson that Domonkos's Petrović-rewriting gives is that it is impossible to express the ecstatic sense of being of the avantgarde poet: neither in Serbian, nor in Hungarian. The ecstasy of being is beyond language; and all experiments to make it verbal are deemed to fail. In the oeuvre of Domonkos suspicion about words is frequent; it is discernable even in his first volume *Rátka* (1963); in *Áthúzott versek* ([Crossed-out Poems] 1971) it is conceptualised which is shown most clearly by the poem *Kormányeltörésben.* Chronologically the Serbian(-Croatian) volume is between the two. *Prevodi trajanja* contains the poetic reflections of both of the other two, but the irony and the banal situations are not as characteristic in it as they are in *Áthúzott versek. Prevodi trajanja* has a much stronger elegiac tone with the enigmatical circumscribing of questions of existence and love. A shared feature in all three volumes is the use of metanarrative poetic solutions. But while *Rátka* has only a few texts which shows it directly, *Áthúzott versek* shows it in its very title. The condition between the two speaks itself out in a foreign language, in a *private foreign* language. In the context of Domonkos's oeuvre Bányai interprets *prevodi trajanja* in the

following way: "'Translation' is the experience of linguistic foreignness in the Serbian(-Croatian) poems of István Domonkos. The poem *Kormányeltörésben* is the 'pre-translational' condition and situation of language (before the language switch)."[35] The interval is shown by the fact that some pieces from the *kiki*-cycle of *Áthúzott versek* [Crossed-out poems] are from *prevodi trajanja*; more precisely, they are recognisable rewritings. Interval poems towards being crossed out. Some poems are really crossed out – crossed out at least in their Serbian form: in order to get a Hungarian suit.

The transubstantiation of kiki

Domonkos's *kiki*-poems raise the problem of self-translation. How could we know which language was translated to the other? These poems were first published in New Symposion 1967/29-30, and, among them, those that were later rewrited in his Serbian(-Croatian) book: *A költőkről [Of Poets]*, *Az életről és halálról [Of Life and Death]* , *A szerelmesekről [Of Lovers]*. Later in *Áthúzott versek* 1971 the author repeated the whole cycle without change, except for a typing mistake: in the poem *A szerelmesekről [Of Lovers]* stands "*mintha*" ['as if'] in the place of "*minta*" ['pattern'] (so the line goes: "*nyújtozó mintha a szőnyegen*" ['stretching as if {pattern} on the carpet'])[36]. In Serbian(-Croatian) versions of kiki-poems the Montparnassian avantgarde muse goes through another "transubstantiation". In Serbian(-Croatian) versions the name *kiki* is not mentioned. In Hungarian the name* could stand for the other who is addressed: it can be interpreted as anyone, one by one, but it can also function as a question: who is this other without whom no dialogue, no communication is possible, without whom there is no poem? But the name *kiki* may refer to the once-Yugoslavian candy's advertisement slogan: "*Bilo kuda, Ki-ki svuda*" [Wherever you are, Ki-ki is there]. In all of the *kiki*-poems there is *kiki* indeed: either explicitly, or as the addressed other to whom the speaker of the poem speaks. It is possible that the reason for the name's absence in the Serbian(-Croatian) versions is that it has no other potential connotations in Serbian – beside the one to the candy. In case we would like to imply the question about personality, it would require *kiki*'s modification in Serbian(-Croatian) to *koko*.

Among the three poems the one titled *A költőkről [Of Poets]* shows the greatest differences in Serbian(-Croatian). Even the title itself has only a slight allusion to the original one: *među pesnicima grada* [among poets of the city]. Only the first line is similar, with the exception of *kiki*: "*leže tako na suncu*"[37] [thus they lay in the sun]. In the Hungarian version it runs: „*kiki a napon hevernek*" [kiki in the sun they lay]. The rest of the Serbian(-Croatian) poem is wholly different. Versions of the other two poems are relatively similar (in their title too) with the exception that *kiki* is never mentioned in Serbian(-Croatian). Reference to the muse can be found only in *o životu i o smrti* [*Of Life and Death*], but even there she is called as "my love" and not named: "*ljubavi ti dobro poznaješ / one koji govore: smrt*" [my love you know them well / those who say: death]. In the Hungarian version: "*kiki ti* jól ismeritek / azokat akik azt mondják: halál*" [kiki you know them well / those who say: death]. (Here the identity of *kiki* is further more complicated with the plural 'you'. Is that possible that *kiki* is not even a single person?) The Serbian(-Croatian) version of the poem *Of Lovers* does not mention *kiki* either, and thus the inner, unanswered dialogic game of the Hungarian version is left out (Hungarian: "*az egyikük kiki a múltban előre*" [one of them kiki straight through the past]; Serbian(-Croatian): "*jedan od njih / u dubokoj prošlosti*"). In Hungarian there is the possibility of questioning right after "*egyikük*" [one of them]: *ki-ki*? [i.e.: 'Who is who?'] In Serbian(-Croatian) this linguistic playfulness is left out. Another important difference appears in the closing stanzas. In the Hungarian version they run like this: "*csónakba szállt / s evezett egész éjen át / az ég és víz közé szorultan*" [he got into the boat / and rowed all night / stuck between water and sky]. In Serbian(-Croatian) "*u barku je seo / i veslao celo popodne / celo veče je veslao / veslao je celu noć / al' kraja nije bilo / niti vodi / niti nebesima*" [he sat into an ark / and rowed all through the afternoon / rowed all through the evening / rowed all night / but there was no end / neither of water / nor of sky]. The Hungarian version directly refers to the intermediate condition; the Serbian(-Croatian) only implies the Petkovićian meta-physical friction between the poles.

The question can thus be raised: which *kiki*-poem is the original? Which one is the copy? Similar questions are frequently asked about self-translations of Samuel Beckett. Beckett, like Domonkos, wrote basically in two languages; he himself translated some of his works from French to English and vice versa.

According to Lance St. John Buttler Beckett's self-translations stem from "the radical incommensurability of languages"[38]. He thinks that rather points out the impossibility of translation than any authorial intention. Steve Connor remarks about the English translation of Mercier et Camier that Beckett's self-translation calls attention to self-repetition as a movement of reconstructing the subject. He says that we may consider both the original and the copy as finished texts: »Each one becomes the variety of the other and each can be received only as difference-values in relation to the other texts.« A similar thing can be said about the kiki-poems of Domonkos: either none or both of them are original. It is the difference of each one to the other that makes it possible to conceive them as individual but doubled works. In relation to Danto I have already mentioned, here translation has not changed the original work, but rather metaphorically transubstantiated it to another original work in which you can recognise traces of the former.

Meanwhile, it was not solely Domonkos among symposionists who experimented with Serbian(-Croatian) texts. Long before him Katalin Ladik wrote Serbian(-Croatian) poems, and long after him Ottó Tolnai published a Serbian(-Croatian) book *Krik ruže* (Scream of the Rose, 1988). But neither of them thematised openly the question of language switch in the way Domonkos did; when the verbal translation of being confronts us with the impossible. The Serbian(-Croatian) language of Domonkos is not Serbian(-Croatian) language, it is not identical with its own tradition. This language has never existed–it is the creation of Domonkos. The doubled language of the experience of foreignness. It communicates the Domonkosian sensibility towards the intercultural condition. Identity is always formulated in the shadow of the other language: in the Serbian(-Croatian) syntax one can feel the presence of Hungarian language. The situation of Domonkos is of course different from that of Jacques Derrida of Maghrebian and Sephardic Jewish ancestry who was compelled to speak French. Domonkos was allowed to speak in his mother tongue. But this mother tongue existed in the direct proximity of several cultures. And this close coexistence left its trace. Experiencing the other became a universal foreignness-experience: a metaphor of being. For Domonkos being is what for Derrida is translation: "the name of the impossible other". The language switch of Domonkos might mean that while Rilke has chosen homelands, Domonkos has chosen "mother tongues". And none of these chosen languages is able to perfectly express the (Rastko

Petrovićian) ecstatic totality of being. All mother tongues are translations of themselves, and thus only shadows of the always unuttered universal condition.

French thinker Henri Meschonnic claims that "considering that translations never translate words or sentences, but rather works and discourses, we might say those translations are places for the interactivity of language [*langage*] and of literature; a kind of literature that can only be recognised and analysed through practical conceptions; literature as expression and not as proposition. Comparative stylistic or psychological descriptions could not bear witness to this kind of literature."[39] In case we conceive translation as interaction with literature and its discourses, then we can draw the conclusion: the translational practice of István Domonkos lines out a reception story; a creative reception of ex-Yugoslavian literatures. It is important for both South Slavic and Hungarian literature hither and beyond the borders. In this sense translation is proposed as a way of interpreting the other, the foreign. One of the most productive translator of Hungarian literature, Sava Babić says: "The translator should be interpreted as a reader who, after reading the work, returns to it."[40] That is why I think that sometimes we should return to a forgotten volume. We might find hidden treasures – as in the case of Domonkos.

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[1] H. K. B.: *The location of culture*, London – New York, Routledge, 227.

[2] Cf.: Itamar Even-Zohar: "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysistem." [= Poetics Today 11:1 (spring 1990)], pp. 45-51.

[3] Kornél Szenteleky: "A vajdasági magyar kultúra és irodalom élete" [The Life of Vojvodinian Hungarian Culture and Literature], In: K. SZ.: *Új lehetőségek – új kötelességek. Egybegyűjtött tanulmányok, kritikák, cikkek II. (1931–1933)*, ed. by Imre Bori, Forum, Újvidék, 2000, 149-150.

[4] EVEN-ZOHAR, op. cit.

[5] György, B. Szabó, "A fordító megbecsülése" [The Appreciation of the Translator]. In: idem, *Éjszakák, hajnalok*, ed. István Bosnyák, Forum, Újvidék, 1990, 153.

[6] Virág Zoltán: *A termékenység szövegtengere*, Forum –Messzelátó, Újvidék – Szeged, 2000, 23.

[7] Virág Zoltán: *A margó vándorai. Az Új Symposionról*, Híd 2005/6, 47.

[8] „Bitno je uočiti da interesovanje vojvođanskih autora za problem teksta i tekstualnosti proizlazi is specifične istorijske i **multikulturne** situacije Vojvodine u kojoj sam jezik nije upis *prirodnog* identiteta, već artificijelni trag prikazivanja govora u pismu i pisma u govoru.", Miško Šuvaković: *Slavko Bogdanović. Politika tela*, Književni novosadski krug K21K – Prometej, Novi Sad, 1997, 15-16.

[9] „Retrospektivno gledano, posebnost konstelacije u Jugoslaviji garantuje činjenica epohalnog poraza jednog ideološki inspirisanog nadnacionalnog programa. Ona izbacuje na površinu činjenicu nedostatka razumevanja između etniciteta, nasilnog razrešavanja interpretativnih konflikata, neraspozume koji se intenziviraju pod ideološkim krovom kao i građevinu kvazi-dijaloga koji se odvija pod zastavom ideološkog, odozgo regulisanog multikulturalizma.", Alpar Losonc: *Multikulturalnost u „evropskom zajedničkom prostoru": 1989 kao izvor mita*, Habitus 1999/mart, 93.

[10] Will Kymlicka: *Igazságosság és biztonság*, Ford.: Karnis Andrea, *Fundamentum* 2001/3, 5.

[11] Quotation from the Hungarian abstract: LOSONC: i. m. 115.

[12] István Fried: *Balkanisztikai kétségek*, In: F. I.: *A közép-európai szöveguniverzum*, Lucidus, Bp., 2002, 156.

[13] FRIED, op. cit.157.

[14] Beáta Thomka: *Prózai archívum. Szövegközi műveletek*, Kijárat, Bp., 2007, 136.

[15] Slavoj Žižek: *The Ticklish Subject*, Verso, London – New York, 2000, 216.

[16] Vö.: Stanley Fish: *Butik-multikulturalizmus, avagy miért képtelenek a liberálisok a gyűlölet beszédéről gondolkodni*, Ford.: Farkas Zsolt, Lettre 2000/31.

[17] „Ko govorimo o nujnosti konstituiranja interkulturnega smisla, ne zagovarjamo te ali one svetovne kulture in njene centralne vloge, marveč se pogovarjamo o kulturi *sveta*, ki se v svoji *sredini* odpira kot kultura v *pogovoru*." Dean Komel: *Multikulturnost in interkulturnost – neko fenomenološko razlikovanje*, Nova Revija 2007/300, 52.

[18] Cited by Raja Raot Dennis Walder, In: D. W.: *Post-colonial Literatures in English*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1998, 43.

[19] László Végel: *Kisebbségi elégia*, In: V. L.: *Hontalan esszék*, Jelenkor, Pécs, 2003. 37.

[20] Ottó Tolnai: *Delta III*, Új Symposion 1971/59, 2.

[21] Erzsébet Csányi: *Vajdaság: az átalakulás tégelye*, In: *konTEXTUS KÖNYVEK I.*, Ed. Erzsébet Csányi, Bölcsészettudományi Kar, Vajdasági Magyar Felsőoktatási Kollégium, Újvidék, 2007, 53.

[22] Beáta Thomka: *Egy Tolnai-metafora visszavezetése*, In: *konTEXTUS KÖNYVEK I.*, i. m. 11.

[23] *„Nem élhet az ember haragban..."*. *Brassai Zoltán beszélgetése Ilia Mihállyal*, Ex Symposion 2007/59, 23.

[24] Végel László: *Gyökerek az idegenségben. Peremvidék – kisebbség – irodalom*, Forrás 2003/11., 53.

[25] *Ja biti*, prev.: Judita Šalgo, Matica Srpska,s Novi Sad, 1973, *Havarija*, prev.: Judita Šalgo, Prosveta, Beograd, 1987. Danilo Kiš has also translated one of Domonkos's poems.

[26] István Fried: *Kétnyelvűség, kettős kulturáltság Kelet-Közép-Európában*, In: F. I.: *Írók, művek, irányok*, Tiszatáj könyvek, Szeged, 2002, 161.

[27] Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó: *Költőietlenség, versszerűtlenség, nyelvtelenség. Domonkos István: Kormányeltörésben*, Tiszatáj 2006/4, 92.

[28] János Bányai: *Létezés-fordítások*, In: B. J.: *Egyre kevesebb talán*, Forum, Újvidék, 2003, 159.

[29] Cf.: Gojko Tešić: *Na grobnom kamenu srpske avangarde (Delo Rastka Petrovića u polemičkom kontekstu)*, In: *Otkrivanje drugog neba: Rastko Petrović*. Zbornik, Uredili: Mihajlo Pantić i Olivera Stošić, Kulturni centar Beograda, Beograd, 2003

[30] ištvan domonkoš: *prevodi trajanja*, tribina mladih, novi sad, 1970, 11-12. (The whole of the volume is written in small letters except for the name Rastko Petrović. As if it has to do something with the fact that Domonkos is a guest of the other language; he is not at home in it.)

[31] In: Rastko Petrović: Sabrane pesme, Izbor i predgovor: Svetlana Velmar-Janković, Srpska Književna Zadruga, Beograd, 1989, 57.

[32] „Ali, u trenucima svoje najveće pesničke snage Rastko Petrović nije hteo da zna ni za kakve obrasce, kao što nije hteo da prizna ama baš nikakva pravila. Žudeo je da ostvari čistu pobunu u pesničkom jeziku kojom će moći iskazivati jedan novi tip svesti, one »probuđene«.", Svetlana Velmar-Janković: *O Rastku Petroviću, pesniku*, In: PETROVIĆ: i. m. XXXVI

[33] „Prvo, da je u pitanju ona stvarnost što je sva od ekstaze ne-stvarnosti koliko i od stvarnosti ekstaze i, drugo, da taj *iskazani* deo stvarnosti mora imati oblik koji mu odgovara.", PETROVIĆ: i. m. XXXVI-XXXVIII

[34] See: Radivoje Mikić: *Pesnički postupak*, Narodna Knjiga/Alfa, Beograd, 1999, 24-45.

[35] BÁNYAI: i. m. 160.

[36] In: Domonkos István: *Áthúzott versek*, Symposion könyvek 31, Forum, Újvidék, 1971, 31.

* The Hungarian word 'ki' means 'who'. In its doubled form 'ki-ki' it has a meaning that can be translated as 'each and everyone'. [Translator's note]

[37] DOMONKOŠ: i. m. 9.

* In Hungarian 'ti' stands for 'you' in the plural (while 'te' means 'you' in singular). [Translator's note]

[38] Lance St. John Buttler. *Two Darks: A Solution to the Probem of Beckett's Bilingualism*, In: Samuel Beckett Today/Ajuourd'hui: An Annual Blingual Review/Revue Annuelle Bilingue 1994/3, 115.

[39] „Budući da prijevodi ne prevode ni riječi ni rečenice, već djela, diskurze, one su mjesto interakcija jezika (langage) i književnosti koju samo koncepti proizišli iz prakse mogu prepoznati i analizirati, ne kao iskaze već kao iskazivanje. O čemu ne svjedoče ni recepti »komparativne stilistike« jezika, ni psihološki opisi." (*Tema*, prev.: Brankica Radić, Zagreb, 2004/5-6., 98-99.)

[40] „Prevodioca uvek treba shvatiti kao čitaoca koji se i posle čitanja vraća određenom delu." (S. B.: *Radionica i argumentum. Između prevoda i originala*, kézirat).

The Representation of Madness in a Medieval English Romance

Ágnes Kanizsai

In the Middle Ages one of the most interesting, entertaining and many-folded genres, in which a more detailed representation of sentimental affairs appeared and could be best followed was romance. These stories were dealing with "the exploits of knights, ladies and noble families seeking honour, love and adventure."[1] These works also provided the ideology of chivalry, a code of the social construction and, at the same time, were the most important medium of the idea of courtly love – and (noble) audiences defined their social identities accordingly. The figure of the madman appears as a subversive phenomenon in this context and ideology, and his qualities serve as a fair basis for a research on insanity in the Middle Ages.

For the exploration of the experience of madness in the Middle Ages, at first, a theoretical framework should be provided. To begin with, I turned to Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*,[2] and for focusing the details I followed Sylvia Huot's *Madness in Medieval French Literature*,[3] which also provided a very strong basis for my interpretations. However, she relied on a theoretical framework that supports an interpretation focused mostly on psychoanalysis and body-theories, while I would like to approach the texts from another interpretative position and to suggest that the madman also had a deconstructive feature. For illustration, two romance heroes are going to be examined with the help of secondary literature: Sir Thomas Malory's representation of Sir Launcelot and Sir Tristram.

Madness enters as an other world to the Thisworld of people of the romance.[4] Regarding the events happening with Tristram and Launcelot, it clearly blocks the flow of the knight's tale and the hero is literally dislocated from the active position. From that very moment on other characters are needed and brought into the plot to drive the story on: the viewpoint is set to theirs, and focus turns to their attitude and reactions towards the madman. Since the madman is followed by this 'social gaze' all the time, his figure is set under public interpretation. On the one hand, the madman is judged by the ideology of knighthood: whether he acts according to or against the code. Consequently, a

behaviour that lacks any humane and knighted[5] features can have harmful effects on the good name of a knight, and denotes a source of shame.

I will also show that in this romance madness affects via love that binds knights to their ladies. However, it has a negative influence, because it obliterates the effect of the emotions raised by love. At the same time, by transgressing their own boundaries, these knights can mobilize such powers that are suppressed and bound by their own limits made up during their socialization.

1. Madness and the subject

The figure of the *fool* or the *madman* as an odd person, in whom the social order and conventions cease bears the freedom of carnival, and an exemption from the regular. Being the one who bore these characteristics the madman held themselves aloof, but at the same time–as "a kind of living metaphor for unspoken tensions that shape communal consciousness"[6]–remained in the social context. As Huot, referring to Judith Butler's analysis, asserts, the figure of the madman is defined by its difference from society, but still cannot be detached from this distinguishing process: the identity of the community (and of the individual who is part of that group) are also defined by differing from the madman, since civilians did not want to make common cause with them.[7] Consequently, the figure of the madman was present in society as some sort of a "verging being", who differed from normal people, but as a human being, cannot be thoroughly exiled from there. At a third reference point they find their own place, undoing the ordinary opposition of nature and community set up by civilized people, and providing a possibility to look *beyond* that opposition. Foucault connected the figure of the madman to water,[8] to an entity that being part of nature, already bounds human beings to its dimension and, being highly symbolic, to their own nature as well. In this respect the madman stands for some sort of a dividing line, the very boundary of difference, and, at that same time, a chance for transgression: "The madman's voyage is at once a rigorous division and an absolute Passage."[9]

Madmen have the characteristics of both sides. On the one hand, they are depicted with (by establishing one "at the zero degree of his own nature") the

features of *animality*,[10] "which put them in radical opposition to the human domain of reason",[11] and which cannot be suppressed by the madman. On the other hand, as human beings once present in society they still have their relationships, or at least traces of them that link them to the community, since "their socially constructed identity has been masked or damaged, but not irreparably lost".[12] As a matter of fact, this irreconcilable opposition of reason and animality (that appears focused in them) keeps the figure of the madman in continuous tension, and gives way to a point of view that goes beyond the ordinary nature-civilization opposition.

The very nature of this tension takes the madman into the situation of a "troubling presence" in society. According to Huot, "the mad are severed both from the defining framework of their own lives, their own memories, the governing faculties of intellect; and from the shared framework of the community, of language, of mutual role-playing and interaction," and they "become so unlike themselves, so absent from themselves that they cannot be recognized, sometimes even by their closest associates".[13] That is, the individual once part of the community disappears and gives place to a presence of an Other, a madman, that is no longer familiar in a civilized community. He is rather an *absence*, a gap in the grid of subjects, where only the trace of this identity remains: in the memory of the sane relations.

Following Huot's chain of ideas, one can realize that madness has a transgressive feature.[14] It is often characterized as a shift from subject to object,[15] as the mad, on the one hand, present "a disturbing confusion of subjecthood and objecthood"[16], as a sort of deviation from the subject, a (re)active, speaking segment of the community towards a state of an-Other, that cannot stand for itself, only exists. With this twofold definition of madness, an abject-quality can also be realized, further enhanced by Huot, who rolls her ideas on towards Kristeva's theory on *Powers of Horrors*: "madness blurs the distinction not only between waking up and sleep, but between life and death"[17]. In the state of madness the subject loses control of language, and language too becomes confused for him;[18] in addition to this, the difference between the 'I' and 'you'[19] becomes blurred as well – the "verging being" of the madman eventually leads to a *crisis* of identity. 'Crisis' with its denotation of a turning point or a dramatic upheaval in one's life is in the form of the trauma, an undesired, unwanted, still

powerful transgression which "disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules."[20] Consequently, "madness is the horror that is everywhere and nowhere: a trauma haunting the outer limits and the inner core of every individual".[21] And with the effacement of the identity its approximation towards death is inevitable – so can madness be associated with the concept of abjection. Huot provides, relying upon a carefully chosen theoretical framework, multiple explanations why the body of society ejects madmen, instead of integrating and taking care of them. From that very moment when the state of madness becomes an object of recognition, the existence of madmen is defined by their bodily desires and primary drives (according to the Freudian terminology), which confine them within their own body. Nothing could hold them back; the Other of Reason is what directs every segment of their lives. For the other subjects surrounding him the madman becomes a source of horror and repulsion, and that is why the ritual chase and beating becomes also emphasized beside the tolerance of the medieval community towards the madman.

Reading the chapter "Stultifera Navis" in Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*, we can realize that Huot approached the figure of the madman similarly to him; however, Foucault's chain of ideas follows an inverted order. Foucault starts from the prevailing theme of death that was peculiar to the Middle Ages, and that as an ethereal threat pervaded the everyday life of the people. As a solution for the accumulated tension due to this

> fear in the face of absolute limit of death turns inward in a continuous irony; man disarms it in advance, making it an object of derision by giving it an everyday, tamed form, by constantly renewing it in the spectacle of life by scattering it throughout the vices, the difficulties, and the absurdities of all men.[...] Madness is the *déjà-là* of death.[22]

So to say, Foucault drives our attention to the carnivalization of death that comes to an end in madness. In his view concealing, banishing and laughing at death brought insanity closer to the medieval; however, the precondition of which remained the "*déjà-là* of death" – this did not efface mortality, only distracted the attention and relieved people's conception of death. On the contrary, Huot asserts that a symbolic death, the death of the subject is a result of madness: death lurks behind insanity[23] as a train of horror and that is why it

elicits abjection from the members of the community. Her view is based on the separating effects of madness, while Foucault's concept of insanity appears as a path that leads to the carnival and to the final exemption of the world the people lived in. However, both theories can come together in a Foucauldian phrase mentioned in connection with Don Quixote's figure: "madness is still the imperishable life of death."[24] The end of the identity and the putting off of death is realized in the very same status of madness, that is "to be mad is to be in the presence of death in life."[25]

2. Folie n'est pas vasselage

In literary representations the cause of insanity can be different acts or events. In this chapter I will examine what sort of change and alteration can happen with two knights of perfection. I will try to track down the most important features of madness, and also try to shed light upon how it can filter through the knight's sublime appearance, and penetrate into their deepest emotions evoking the crisis of identity I mentioned earlier. My interpretation will also show how it will then remove them from their surroundings, relations, and cause the heroes' insane flight into the wilderness. Madness in these texts is caused by some sort of emotional trauma,[26] since emotions are the only phenomena against which muscles of steel, armours of wonders and the greatest duelling experience, too, are inert. Since they are knighted subjects, the heroes are bound by the love of a lady and by the determining power of knighthood. Both of these phenomena support a state (of mind) where the knight is powerless against his lady, and becomes vulnerable to the impact of insanity.

For this paper I used Caxton's version Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*; however, I also paid attention to Eugene Vinaver's literary historical study that deals with the Winchester Manuscript. The whole book focuses on war, and adventures and love of knights, who set off on narrative paths on their own, or along with some of their fellow knights. Although it is often echoed that the themes of love and war are essential elements of chivalric romances, another experience comes into focus concerning the great knights: that of madness. Two of them experience madness in *Le Morte D'Arthur*: Sir Launcelot du Lake and Sir Tristram de Liones. There is a parallel in *what* happens to the knights;

however, the main difference lies in *how* these events happen to them. In a structure like that of romances not only love, but–as great influencers–ladies also play a central role. [27]

Sir Launcelot du Lake

Books VI, XI and XII of Malory's work focus on the figure of Sir Launcelot; however, some episodes dealing with other knights also filter into the narrative of these parts showing the typical structure of romance-building. Although he was mentioned earlier, the "flower of all knighthood" is really introduced in Book VI, in which the reader learns of his magnificent features[28] as well as in the episodic adventures where he is seeking further fame and honour. As for fighting and knight errantry, in Malory both have a narrative-forming power. These adventures (during the heroic image-building) are often attached to "damosels", who usually function as alibis for Malory to introduce a shorter (sub)narrative.[29] The ladies are either looking for Sir Launcelot, encountering him, fleeing from an attacker and asking for help, or are sent to offer, or to turn his attention to a new challenge (where he can prove himself as a knight and earn honour).[30] When these chapters run out of challenges offered by damsels, a "cross-armouring" with Sir Kay opens new opportunities for Launcelot for heroic image-building. This cross-dressing and the use of enchantment foreshadows the identity-violating motifs that play an important role in the following books dealing with the circumstances of Sir Launcelot's becoming insane. In addition, the recognition of the knight's real identity (by other knights) is also a returning motif in the course of these stories.

In the first chapters of Book XI a complete subplot is carefully built up to fulfil the prophecy of the conception of Galahad. The hermit's foretelling of the future events already raises certain unease in the reader, which can be associated with the anticipation of insurmountable obstacles – even for Sir Launcelot, which is in his case the promise of treason and enchantment. Two enchantresses are the organizers of the events, and act independently of each other; however, both of them are needed for the set-up of the subplot: Morgan le Fay to arrange the meeting of Elaine and Sir Launcelot,[31] and Dame Brisen for the dovetailing of the "lovers". The role of the latter is crucial in these scenes, since due to "her

crafts"[32] she can manipulate the surroundings in order to divert the plot and, at the same time, triumph over the knight, since, as it was mentioned in Book VI, he can only be overcome by "treason or enchantment".[33] In the scene when Dame Brisen seduces Sir Launcelot from his knighthood and averts him to another lady, magic and delirium[34] interweave and affect simultaneously, giving free way to a doubly subversive power in his mind. The realisation of the illusionary circumstances that had cheated on his senses and that he had slept with another lady, were a blow to his reason – which can be an explanation why he drew his sword on Elaine, and later can be seen as the cause of his double shame.

The other determining feature of a knight, love[35] is also hurt in this subplot. A courtly knight devotes his life also to the service of one supreme lady and to proving his affection (a true and noble love) to her. The violation of this feeling undoubtedly causes harm – theoretically speaking, especially for a knight's identity, since it is determined by having a Lady whom he serves. Even if it only seems as a small rift on the image of the self, it offsets him as a knight and affects his identity as well. This little blur lurks for a while in the narrative and remains hidden in Arthur's court until the very moment when Sir Bors brings word of Sir Launcelot's adventures at Corbin and of his begetting of a son. Even if Sir Launcelot is excused of his deeds by Guenever, Elaine's appearance–later at the feast–recalls in the knight that he is 'doubly shamed,[36] and due to the Queen's playing upon his subjectivity he becomes only the endurer of the following events. Guenever frames the guests' accommodation and pays particular attention to the dwelling of Launcelot to save him (and herself) from another shameful event. However, Dame Brisen's crafts turn the situation inside out again, and bring the knight to Elaine's arms. When the Queen learns of this second cheat on her and meets the knight on the floor Sir Launcelot is forced to an ethical position where he had to face deeds that he has not committed, at least not intentionally; and with harsh words she rebukes the knight and sends him away. The text then depicts a huge emotional trauma: Launcelot "took such an heartly sorrow at her words that he fell down to the floor in a swoon. [...] And when Sir Launcelot awoke of his swoon, he leapt out at a bay window into the garden"[37]. The seriousness of his state is further enhanced by Dame Brisen's reply to Elaine: "for I warn you he is clean out of his mind; and yet he shall be well holpen and but by miracle."[38]

The reader can follow Launcelot's figure in Book XII through the telling of the narrator or from the point of view of other characters (through the conceptually used 'social gaze') after he had lost his reason. He is depicted as groaning and sighing, and instead of calm approaching, he usually leaps.[39] The description usually gives him animalistic features,[40] and, at the same time, enhances the madman's connection to nature, drawing its figure towards a liminal position: although he remains human in his appearance, he is unable to communicate, flees from other human beings and acts like a wild creature. However, he cannot be part of nature, either. When coming across other knights and companions by whom he is attacked, Launcelot overcomes them with unheard of physical strength, and the reader can get an impression of him becoming even more powerful than earlier being the best knight. Without his armour and clothed in silence, Launcelot is unrecognisable for the other characters; however, there is always someone among them who can identify him, or at least guess that he is a knight of great worship.[41] Although the narrator refers to him as Sir Launcelot, his identity seems to be lost at the very moment of his becoming insane, it only survives as a fragment of remembrance in the memory of other characters and this trace keeps his narrative in the plot as a hiding stream.

The two sorts of treatment applied to Launcelot by his finders may reflect the medievals' attitude towards madmen. Foucault's mentioning of the different attitudes towards madmen in the first chapter of his *Madness and Civilization* (although it is a view closer to the Renaissance than to the Middle Ages) can be traced in Malory's text, with some inconsistencies, however. In the monograph it is asserted that madmen were not expelled in every case, but cared for and enclosed to certain places reserved for them.[42]

Malory deals with the treatment of a madman in three shorter narratives. The mad Launcelot first comes across Sir Bliant's group. After having found him they take him to the Castle Blank where "they bound his hands and his feet, and gave him good meats and good drinks, and brought him again to his strength and his fairness".[43] Launcelot's being bound and held in the castle, in my view, represents a treatment to balance and to give a madman limits again after losing them in insanity. Nevertheless, this "cure" can also be seen as an attempt to approximate the madman from nature (*wild*erness) to social *order*: still the main

cause of failure is that his helpers only tried to heal the body and expected a corresponding mental melioration. Later, when Launcelot encounters a hermit, he is taken to a hermitage, where "the hermit healed him of his wound."[44] Since the saintly man's lore was not thoroughly appropriate for the task, according to the text, he "waxed feeble, both of his [Launcelot's] body and of his wit; for the default of his sustenance he waxed more wooder than he was aforehand"[45] and then he flees and disappears in the forest. In my view, the failure to heal Launcelot can be associated with the hermit's own liminal position. Since he himself is also someone who is separated from society, his attempt to approximate the knight towards order is doomed to fail.

The third story represents both of the main Foucauldian examples of dealing with madmen appearing among the city folk; that is, caring for the insane in a place reserved for them, and on the other hand, the public chase and beating of madmen.[46] In chapter 3 (still in Book XII) "by adventure" the mad knight got to the city of Corbin where "he ran through the town to the castle; and then all the young men [...] ran after Sir Launcelot, and there they threw turves at him, and gave him many sad strokes."[47] Such occasions are considered in the Foucault's work as a kind of mock race, where the madman is ritually driven out of the city.[48] However, this scene could not only function as a rite of exclusion, but also as a part of a *rite de passage*. As for Launcelot's case, he arrived to the city of Corbin as a stranger and, according to van Gennep's scheme, he came into a doubly isolated status.[49] Reaching the castle successfully after the chase, he was welcome, provided with clothes and enclosed to a little house,[50] which shows that he was kept in a liminal position. Still, this implies the schematic attitude towards an alien and a treatment for a madman. In King Pelles's castle Launcelot is taken care of and seems to be counted as a man: however, the reader could feel as if he was taken as an animal. Despite the fact that he is given clothes, he is enclosed into a little house, the surrounding people put "straw underneath him", and "then every day they would throw him meat, and set him drink, but there was but few would bring him meat to his hands."[51] Eventually, Launcelot comes to his senses in the castle: when the king's daughter, Elaine recognizes her love behind the insane features, she asks her father to help, and then the mad knight is brought to a chamber "where was the holy vessel of the Sangrail", and putting him into it, "by miracle and by virtue of that holy vessel Sir Launcelot was healed and

recovered" – which refers back to Dame Brisen's reply on the only way Sir Launcelot can be healed.[52]

When Sir Launcelot comes to his senses, he gives evidence of feeling shame and regret, even though he was not in control of his own acts and thoughts. In the dialogue of chapter 5, one can realize that the time Launcelot spent in madness slips from his mind completely. His shame can be associated with the sense that he fell to insanity and was a madman, apparently at the far end from his sublime knightly status, one who cannot meet the requirements of the knightly ideas, therefore unable to relate to them and determine himself as a splendid knight.[53]

The sudden feeling of regret–that Launcelot had done a very reprehensible act when he drew his sword upon Elaine–can be due to either an unauthorized way of thinking, or supreme sensitivity[54] that is one of the results of the transgression of insanity. The way he refers to himself also supports this idea: he calls himself (and makes others refer to him as well) Le Chevaler Mal Fet, 'the knight that hath trespassed'.[55] Through the negative connotations of trespassing he faces himself and regrets sinning against knightly behaviour, and at the same time, this sinning suggests the abject feature of madness and losing control of heroic deeds: he virtually came off of the body of knighthood, and dooms himself to live on as a deviant, condemned knight.

Shame cannot be avoided by the other knight of great worship, Sir Tristram, either; however, at him it is not as emphatic as Sir Launcelot's. Sir Tristram and Isoud are watched and monitored all the time by King Mark (who intends to find infidelity, indeed) to uncover the private dallying of the knight and to cause harm to his public reputation. When he is caught in Isoud's chamber he "demands that he be given the opportunity to fight to avoid death",[56] while he also "suggests that his good deeds in some way outweigh his adultery with Isoud".[57] Although he tries to fight for his love, eventually he becomes exiled from Cornwall, which provides another piece to build the background story of his becoming mad.

Sir Tristram de Liones

Unlike the story of Sir Launcelot, Sir Tristram's tale can be followed by the reader already from his ancestry and birth. Malory adapted and elaborated the main sequences of the French *Prose Tristan* and "shifted the emphasis from the original story of tragic love to the protagonist's adventures in the service of the Round Table."[58] In the beginning of Sir Tristram's tale Malory seems to follow the style of the *Prose Tristan*: the narrative parts are more frequent than in the other books of his *Le Morte D'Arthur*, and only later (when Tristram starts his knight-errantry to get glory and a name) does the peculiar dialogical technique by which the author usually depicts the knights appear.

The romance plot starts when Sir Tristram is being drawn into a subplot the organizing motifs of which are poison and potion. Getting to the place where the poison on the sword of Sir Marhaus was made can be associated with the initiative rites.[59] After his recovering he "cast great love to La Beale Isoud,"[60] became her knight and fought in her name in various other narrative paths;[61] however, Sir Tristram returns once again in the name of King Mark. On their way back to Cornwall they accidentally drink the potion that was intended to raise love between the King and La Beale Isoud, and that determines the main narrative of their tragic love later on, making them unable to separate themselves from each other.

Love, as we mentioned earlier as one of the main determining features of the knight, is hurt in Sir Tristram's Books as well. Cheating appears again, just like in Sir Launcelot's tale, and becomes one of the causes of the emotional trauma that shoves the knight to madness.[62] However, cheating itself is two-fold here. Another subplot opens when Sir Tristram is exiled from Cornwall, departs to Brittany where he is healed by Isoud la Blanche Mains,[63] and whom he eventually weds.[64] However (even if he acted against the courtly code and left his lady in this sense), Tristram cannot escape from the memory of the love felt towards La Beale Isoud and sets off to Cornwall and takes Sir Kehydius with him. The following "cheating scene" remains hidden in the main text and appears only as an allusion;[65] that is, articulated only in a symbolic dimension, during a correspondence. Sir Kehydius falls in love with the Queen at first sight and "then privily he wrote unto her letters and ballads of the most goodliest that were used

in those days."[66] and because of the feeling of compassion the Queen replied secretly, without letting Sir Tristram know it. When he discovers the correspondence he feels great pain and as if they were traitors to him and after an unsuccessful attack on Sir Kehydius, he "armed him in such armour as he had for to fight with them that would withstand him."[67]

The derangement of Sir Tristram's does not happen as suddenly as Sir Launcelot's; however, it can also be attributed to an emotional trauma felt after the discovery of the letters. The "great dole" overcomes him slowly and dismantles his identity, as it is shown textually in Malory's work. The escaping figure of Sir Tristram can be followed through the view of other characters appearing along his narrative path. At first Sir Fergus (who tells about the knight's great sorrow to Isoud's damosel) goes after the knight and functions as the describing gaze for the narrator: "[T]hen upon a night he put his horse from him, and then unlaced his armour, and then Sir Tristram would go into the wilderness, and brast down the trees and boughs"[68] and he spent there several months, "[a]nd then was he naked and waxed lean and poor of flesh; and so he fell in the fellowship of herdmen and shepherds."[69] His insanity is not so sudden, extreme and powerfully displayed as Launcelot's, with the animalistic features being less emphasized too. However, the strength of his blows let the releasing effect of madness be shown. Although Tristram wanders naked with a sword in his hand and let the shepherds beat him and make "him like a fool,"[70] he preserves one of his main features: he plays the harp when he gets one in his hands. Admittedly, his connection to the herdsmen and to art is what stabilizes him in a liminal position,[71] and the low-key representation of the animalistic features show that his liminality is focused in his character and is not displayed by the place to which he is confined.

A certain clothing-metaphor can be actuated in the scene when King Arthur's fool, Dagonet comes across King Mark and tells him about his encounter and fight[72] with the mad knight.[73] Here Dagonet identifies Tristram as a (fellow) fool,[74] too; however, he also emphasizes the difference between them, by referring to himself as 'I fool', while calling the other 'that fool'. Dagonet determines himself and his subjectivity vis-á-vis the other fool in a way that theoretically speaking, he establishes himself as a subject with an identity he decided to put on.[75] As a "speaking subject", Dagonet is able to give account of

the status of a fool, a status the making of which he himself decided to undertake. However, the very subjects of experiencing madness remain the great knights whose identity were determined and built up after being knighted and dismantled at the moment of the onset of madness.[76]

Another telling word is that Dagonet mentions that the fool is naked, which signifies a symbolic disrobing of Tristram's identity. It is like casting his armour off before fleeing to the wilderness, which can be interpreted as a symbolic breakdown of the identity and the (re)appearance of the pure, unmotivated subject that cannot determine itself since it lacks language for it. As a matter of fact, with the scarce usage of language the mad Tristram only refuses to make common cause with other characters.

The duel between the mad Tristram and Sir Dagonet can also be interpreted as a hiding stream-memento, a textual representation of the serious discourse and the comic sub-discourse in Malory's work.[77] The mad (tragic) knight and "a knight of a fool" encounter, and the "serious side" symbolically triumphs over the comic one.[78] Ironically, the comic knight is the one that can use language and determine himself, as opposed to Tristram: what is more, their description also show that the comic side carries certain merriment, since Dagonet is denotated (and referred by himself as well) with the word "fool", and not circumscribed with expressions like "wood", "out of his wits", "out of his mind", "wild wood" that signify 'pathological' madness. By the same token, Dagonet's figure has a more subtle and theoretical feature in this scene, although only momentarily. The fool's appearance unbinds the madman's situation that is already beyond (in a third position) the nature-society opposition. Being a third element in another structure, the figure of the fool pushes the insane into another binary opposition: that of the madman and society.[79]

The Books of Sir Tristram represent the treatment of the madman similarly to the Books of Sir Launcelot; however, the Foucauldian examples are not so well elaborated. His first encounter with a caring man is during his ten-day stay at the hermitage, where a symbolic taming is represented in the text.[80] It does not seem to be successful, since a bit later Tristram comes across a giant and he grabs another sword to fight him and save the life of Sir Dinaunt. King Mark succeeded in finding Tristram, following and tracing back the telling of Dagonet

and Sir Dinaunt, and then he made his knights to *put mantles on*[81] the madman and take him to his castle where "they bathed him, and washed him, and gave him hot suppings till they had brought him well to his remembrance; but all this while there was no creature that knew Sir Tristram, nor what man he was."[82] In these scenes, Tristram's insanity was closer to a sort of melancholy caused by great sadness felt over the loss of his lady's love for him. The healing method also supports this chain of ideas, since wonderful events or holy devices were not needed for bringing him to his senses; however, the presence of a community obviously plays a crucial role here as well: they recognize the persona of the madman and try to assimilate him again. This (re)approximation is represented in the recognition scene, where the still speechless Sir Tristram lays in the garden and is recognized only by the little brachet, which was given to Isoud as a love-token. Since no one knew "what man he was", we can see that madness drew off the subject (of dismantled identity) from society and deprived it of all his attachments, and so it can only live on as a sort of absence in the network of relations.

Malory's tragic knights, as we have seen, both experience madness. Although, the basic points (that is, *what* happens to them) correspond in their stories, there are also differences in *how* does all this befall. The most striking difference is that Launcelot's insanity is much more powerful, while that of Tristram is somewhat low-key. The animalistic features are also much more emphasized, and the subplot with the hermit is more negative in Launcelot's story with the reader accompaniying him to the deep whirl of madness. His recovery is also due to the holy vessel (and Dame Birsen's magic); however, the integrating effort of the surrounding people also plays an important role. At the same time, Tristram's insanity is much more "shallow". He is more connected to society – his liminal quality is focused in his figure (and not in the place to which he is confined): he plays the harp, fights with a sword and joins the herdsmen. Tristram destabilizes his identity[83] from within and the onset of madness is not denoted by one sudden impact of emotional trauma, but is rather a prolonged process. For recovery he only needs human care and can be integrated by being talked to and brought back to his role. Now we can see that the physical plane is more emphasized in Launcelot, as opposed to Tristram, whose madness "takes place" in a symbolic dimension.

Treating Madness

In Malory's text Sir Launcelot did not speak except for two occasions. However, both were accounts of dissociating himself, and were rather like melancholic remarks.[84] Apart from these he seems to remain enclosed in the text, until the very moment when the maiden of the Sangrail appears and then with the help of the holy vessel he is cured. The other knight of great worship, Sir Tristram de Liones, also remains silent in his madness, except for two utterances, one of which is when he asks his lady to leave him alone.[85] These utterances show the madman as a subject removed from society. According to Foucault's and Huot's conjoined theories, in the state of madness the subject loses control of language. At the same time, language too becomes confusing for him, just like the difference between the 'I' and 'you',[86] which signifies that the identity of the subject is dismantled since it lacks the language to determine himself. That is, the 'I' cannot assume itself as a "subject", since it is only possible if the position of the 'I' is evoked by someone vis-á-vis to him, and because, according to Benveniste, the subject itself is formed during speech. This is one of the reasons why the madman should be followed all the time and a shift from 'subject' to 'object' happens in the representation. The mad subject is unable to communicate with and react to his surroundings which leads to a shift in emphasis from self-representation to narratorial and to 'social gaze'. Now the determining feature of self-awareness also belongs to the community, as Huot claimed, so the identity of the community (and of the individual who is part of that group) is also defined as different from the madman.[87]

In these texts the madman was always pushed among boundaries by the caring attention of the community. This and the continuous gaze of the surrounding people and that the mad subjects were called on their names helped in integrating the madman to society. So the identity of the subject was formed from the outside. The main point of this attention is, on the one hand, the interpretation of the madman and the continuous talk where the madman is assumed as 'you' (therefore to raise again his self-awareness and the assumption of the 'I'). On the other hand, taking care of the madman is somewhat similar to pushing among boundaries again and determining his identity from the outside:

just like putting "mantles on him",[88] "ordain[ing] him clothes to his body, and straw beneath him, and a little house".[89] The knights coming to their senses seem as if they were rewritten: they are "held" in language, brought into discourse and are overseen. And as a result of this the madman becomes assimilated: Launcelot recovers with the help of the holy vessel, Tristram needed care and being called on his name. From that very moment their identities are put back on them and they lose their abject feature.

3. Out of the Wood

The love of the knights "heels up" after returning from the bypaths of insanity and recovering their knightly identity. They remain as strong and mighty as they were, just as if transgression–caused by the experience of madness–had made the boundaries that determined (and at the same time limited) them as knightly subjects permeable. The experience of madness is then the dismantling of identity and the losing of knightly perfection (that ejects the subject from society similarly to madness[90]), with which the heroes' power that was held inside transgress these limits. After coming to their senses, with this newly gained freedom they can perform acts that lead to even greater worship – along with public interpretation that attributes to the knights more glory and honour.

Their liminal position is the madmen's most characteristic feature. In their insane flight they offend against their most determining qualities (knighthood and "vertuous love"), which would be interpreted by the 'social gaze' as shameful acts. However, the madman is saved, since (with the dismantling of the identity, revealing animalistic features and observing silence) they are hardly recognized and so shame cannot be attributed to them. In those who yet (seems to) recognize them the feeling of the sublime arises.[91] It is evoked, on the one hand, by the knights' perfection and their extraordinary abilities that raise the (uneasy) feeling of the spectator's own limits. At the same time, the "great dole" and suffering that caused madness affects via empathy and attracts the spectators. However, abjection is also a sort of reaction that is given to the madman's appearance, and has an effect similar to that of the sublime: by sharing the same attributes as human beings the members of the society cannot become estranged from the madman despite their repulsive features. The

community reacts by keeping them in a liminal position: Launcelot was kept in a reserved place[92]; Tristram lived with the herdsmen.[93]

The figure of the madman is endowed with deconstructive features. Madness dislocates the knights from the center of the story and then they are followed from the point of view of the narrator and other characters in the romance. They are also removed from their ladies and fail to perform as knights, which means that the frames of the romance plot are also stirred up. As we can see, madness affects mostly these two determining features of romances, with the subversion of which it only reinforces the importance of them. The frames become perceivable only by the madman's transgression, and when the hero comes to his senses, these frames figuratively withdraw and lurk in the background.

Secondly, madness dissolves the binary opposition of nature and society. The figure of madman bears the features of both sides and, by differing from them, he embodies a third point of view that points beyond this opposition: he is continuously on the move (and since he lacks language, therefore cannot stand for himself) and the reader can only follow him through the gaze of the narrator or of other characters. The reader is at the same time a fellow-interpreter of the community who also becomes subjected to the feelings raised by events and hardships that the figure of the madman has to endure. Thus the binary opposition is stolen into the narrative paths wherever the madman runs: that of the reader and the audience. This is how these deconstructive features test the frames and peculiarities of the romance plot.

Only the trace is what is left behind (in the grid of intersubjective relations) by the subject that dismantles its identity. It is signified by the absence that is left after the disappearance of the knight, and the memory of his acts that are still held in high respect. This trace and characters that are on the track of the mad knights (e.g. Sir Bors, Sir Ector and Sir Lionel; Sir Palomides) also drive the narrative on and open new paths for other subplots – and other stories for which the madness-plots provide a crossroad.

Another determining feature, love, remains untouched. It serves as a(n unmoved) mover of the romance and is present as a basis of the relations among the characters. In the texts I examined, madness was caused by a sudden impact

of emotional trauma that is invoked by the lady's deviation from this sentiment: either by powerful rebukes and doubting the knight's worthiness;[94] or by a hidden (symbolic) cheat on the lover.[95] So affects madness via love that bounds the knight to his lady. And as central characters, the knights become dislocated, removed from the body of knighthood and cut off the sentiment felt towards the lady, which would both divert the main stream of the narrative. They can only come to their senses with the help of the caring audience, who were at the same time the other important gaze that practiced a continuous interpretation on them.

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[1] Roberta L. Krueger, "Introduction" In. Roberta L. Krueger, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2.

[2] Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1967).

[3] Sylvia Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).

[4] My idea is based on: Jeff Rider, "The other worlds of romance," In: Roberta L. Krueger, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 115-131.

[5] Nagy uses the term 'knighted' in his article "as a parallel to the widely used term 'gendered' to suggest that knighthood determines the identities of the figures in Malory's narrative similar to the way gender determines subjects. Nagy, Gergely, "A Fool of a Knight, a Knight of a Fool: Malory's Comic Knights," *Arthuriana* 14.4 (2004): 59.

[6] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, 3.

[7] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, 5.

[8] "It is for the other world that the madman sets sail in his fools' boat; it is from the other world that he comes when he disembarks." Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 11. On the one hand, water was considered in the Middle Ages as an impassable boundary for supernatural beings (e.g. demons and witches), so playing an important role in the belief can emphasize its confining feature. See: Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 156-165. On the other hand, the triad of water, the Otherworld and the figure of the madman turns out to be closely connected following this chain of ideas. Water also symbolizes a power that filters through and corrodes every kind of boundary, and since it was considered as a gate to the Otherworld it already foreshadows the boundary-feature of the madman.

[9] Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 11.

[10] In Foucault's view (that animals symbolically bore "the values of humanity"), with a sudden change of this relation these symbols became the signifiers of the insane qualities that are present in the depth of the human mind. In my opinion it is the animalistic feature that drives the madman away from society and that "reveals the dark rage, the sterile madness that lie in men's hearts." Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 21.

[11] Both quotations: Gary Gutting, "Foucault and the History of Madness" In Gutting, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 53.

[12] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, 3.

[13] Quotations: Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, 1.

[14] For further support I used Sutyák's monograph in which he takes account of Foucault's theory on transgression and associates it with madness. By applying his theory we may realize that insanity is not like disregarding of boundaries at all: by violating limits and boundaries, it forces them to exercise their controlling power through which they can reveal themselves. Although madness impugns, it never negates the existence of these boundaries. It rather confirms them, while, at the same time, validates its own limitless source as well. This quality of madness also refers to the phenomenon of the *carnival*, the function of which is quite the same, since it does not resolve, but subverts social order, and, at the same time, it confirms the authority of these boundaries. Sutyák, *Michel Foucault gondolkodása*, 21-23.

[15] Concerning the subjects being examined later in primary literature, we will see that in the representation of madness there is a shift in point of view which can be traced back to the subject's coming off the body of society and that he is unable to communicate with and react to his surroundings. The mad knights can be followed through the narrator's and other character's view: the continuous relay makes it possible to follow the insane heroes who are lost in the endless paths of their own confused mind. As a result of this, the public interpretation plays an important role, although the identity of the mad knights most of the time remains hidden except for one or two recognizers. This public view (or 'social

gaze', so to say) is important, because it has (according to ideology of the knighted world) a continuous determining and interpreting effect on them and it calls later the knights' regret of their madness and also a feeling of shame.

[16] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, 1. The corpse haunts death, signifies the end of the 'I' and a state/us from which the 'I' wants to withdraw continuously, that is "the utmost of abjection." The corpse signifies the shift between subjecthood and objecthood: it is "the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything. It is no longer I who expel, »I« is expelled. The border has become an object." At the corpse a boundary appears: it is part of the I, some sort of a limit that binds the (body of the) I to death – the end of the identity also reveals and "death infecting life" is what makes the 'I' be convulsive, and what disseminates the subject to both parts of the boundary: abjection haunts the boundaries of subjectivity. Quotations: Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (Leon S. Roudiez transl., New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 3-4.

[17] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, 4.

[18] One can realize a parallel between the unwanted separation from language and not being subjected to social order, and Foucault remarks on the madman: „He is a prisoner in the midst of what is the freest, the most open of routes: bound fast at the infinite crossroads. He is the Passenger *par excellence*: that is the prisoner of the passage". Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 11. Since the mad do not know the way how to take steps on this road and not even the direction, they become completely lost and bound in a state of a being that cannot express himself, that has lost its surroundings, and is confined to insanity.

[19] Émile Benveniste, "Szubjektivitás a nyelvben." In: Bókay Antal, Vilcsek Béla, Szamosi Gertrud, Sári László eds. *A posztmodern irodalomtudomány kialakulása* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2002), 60.

[20] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, 4.

[21] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, 10.

[22] Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 16.

[23] Trying to approximate Foucault's conception about the connection of death and madness to Hout's, in my opinion madness is "the *déjà-là* of death". On the one hand, because for the late medievals (and for the people of the early Renaissance) it was the mocking of death that helped to unburden the fear from the ever-present boundary with irony and derision. On the other hand, madness is what dismantles the identity and brings it to a symbolic death, like an ephemeral transgression of the lurking end of the individual. Death as a boundary of existence is always present in the conscience of the others even without the experience of having transgressed it; however, by transgression (experiencing the 'other' side of it as well) its presence becomes even more deepened in other individuals. Therefore, it can trigger the feeling of abject and sublime in them, since death is an experience that awaits everyone. Madness is the wraith of the end, in which one can feel the lack of the one passed away and left traces behind. My thoughts were based on: Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 15-17, and Sutyák, *Michel Foucault gondolkodása*, 24.

[24] Foucault, *Madness and Civilization,* 32.

[25] During, *Foucault and Literature*, 33.

[26] According to the Freudian terminology, trauma has an effective impact on the subject when he/she is forced to a situation in which a proper reaction (e.g. 'retention') to the experience is restrained or objected. On trauma: J. Laplanche, J. B. Pontalis, *A pszichoanalízis szótára* (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1994), 486-489.

[27] My thoughts were mostly based on: Helen Moore, "Introduction," In: *Le Morte Darthur* (London: Wordsworth Classics, 1996), v-xiii.

[28] "[B]ut in especial it was proved on Sir Launcelot du Lake, for in all tournament and jousts and deeds of arms, both for life and death he passed all other knights, and at no time he was never overcome but if it were by *treason* or *enchantment* [...], Queen Guiniver had him in great favour above all knights, and in certain he loved the queen again above all other ladies damosels of his life." (italics – mine) Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur* (Janet Cowen ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), vol. 1, 194.

[29] They can also be interpreted as nodes of chance during a knight's adventure. According to Jill Mann, "The adventure is beyond the knight's control; it is something that comes to him." Jill Mann, "Malory: Knightly Combat in *Le Morte D'Arthur*" In: Boris Ford ed., *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature. Medieval Literature: Chaucer and the Alliterative Tradition* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982) vol. 1, 333.

[30] And since these requests are of ladies, they should not be turned down in accordance with the ethical code of knights. (cf. the Pentecostal Oath, Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 115-116.) Consequently, the damsels are devices used for continuing the story and play an important role in the heroic image-building, that is how different identities are established, formed and become knights of great worship (in Malory's knightly world). Cf. Andrew Lynch, *Malory's Book of Arms: The Narrative Combat in Le Morte Darthur* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 1-15.

[31] The meeting of "the fairest lady of the world" with the "best knight of the world" in the "fairest tower that ever he [Launcelot] saw." However, this arrangement is not as clearly intentional as Dame Brisen's, since Launcelot seems only a fitting link of the scene. Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 188-189.

[32] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 191.

[33] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 194.

[34] "And then Dame Brisen brought Sir Launcelot a cupful of wine; and anon as he had drunken that wine he was so assotted and mad that he might make no delay; [...] and he weened that maiden Elaine had been Queen Guenever." Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 192.

[35] According to R. T. Davies's article on Malory's "Vertuouse Love", the four essential features that determine a knight's (true) love are: stability, loyalty and the rejection of promiscuity and of impetuousness. Another important 'criterion' is that "[t]he knight must serve God first and the lady the second"; however, this subordination is not so rigid, since the order can be inverted. R. T. Davies, "Malory's »Vertuouse Love«" In *Studies in Philology*, 53 (1956), 461-462., cf. Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, 18.25, 425-426.

[36] The feeling of shame is the most emphatic in Sir Launcelot. Firstly, he felt shame because he drew a sword upon Elaine (a lady) in his first anger over the treason, and so he violated the Pentecostal Oath. Secondly, when he cheated on Guenever and the affair became uncovered before the Queen (that is, ironically, an adultery in adultery, since Launcelot effectively assumes himself as a lover to "the Queen to whom he is as faithful as if he were committed to her in marriage"), he offends, according to Davies, the "criteria" of "vertuouse love". Davies, "Malory's »Vertuouse Love«", 461-462.

[37] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 202.

[38] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 204.

[39] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 205, 216-220.

[40] In Foucault's view, this sort of *animality* is what hides in men's hearts and that represents the dark rage and chaos for other subjects living in the social order. Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 21.

[41] "'Sir,' said the dwarf,'it is not worship to hurt him for he is a man out of his wit; and doubt ye not he hath been a man of great worship [...], and me beseemeth [...] he resembleth much onto Sir Launcelot, for him I saw at the great tournament beside Lonazep."; " And when they saw so many wounds upon him, all they deemed that he had been a man of worship"; "And when she beheld him, anon she fell in remembrance of him, and knew him verily for Sir Launcelot." Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, 216, 220, 221.

[42] Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 9.

[43] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 217.

[44] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 219.

[45] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 219.

[46] Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 10.

[47] The expression "gave / lashed him many sad strokes" appears in Malory's work more than fifteen times and generally used in the description of knightly combat. This implies that it could be used as a further enhancement for the

feeling of the sublime, on the one hand, for the audience, while, on the other hand, for the spectators in the story. Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, 220.

[48] Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 10.

[49] On the one hand, such a person is weak, since he is left out of society, while, on the other hand, he is strong, since he is taken to be part of the sacred world, while the members of society remain in the profane. The purpose of these rites was to neutralize or to make him benevolent. There are usually three stages of the rites of passage: first, the *rite of separation*: one of the realizations of this rite, according to van Gennep's work, corresponds to the description of the chase of Launcelot by the citizens. In the *marginal stage* the stranger was given clothes, a separated accommodation and some foodstuff. While the rite of passage ended with the *rites d'agrégation*, when the alien is received to the members of society. This way, as van Gennep asserts these liminal rites were for the preparation of alliance. Arnold van Gennep, *Átmeneti rítusok* (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2007), 48-49, 55, 59-61.

[50] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 220.

[51] Both quotations: Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 220.

[52] Both quotations: Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 221.

[53] In her article, Angela Gibson shows that Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* "evinces a strong ethic of shame that values the public display of loyalties" and which is strongly connected to the defamation of one's reputation. She also mentions Mark Lambert's claim that "[t]he desire to avoid shame rules [...] the characters in the book," so plays public interpretation an important role in each knight's life concerning their acts according to knighthood and "vertuouse love". When experiencing madness the knights are always followed by an outer view (let it be the narrator's or other characters' point of view): they are seen as running into the wilderness leaving behind their weapons and armour, fighting without art and leaping like an animal, and as they cannot meet the requirements of being a knight "of great worship" and leaving their ladies. In the light of Gibson's views, madness is like an 'unintended infidelity,' because when experiencing it, the knighted subject turns inside out almost at each point of its determining points. Shame cannot be avoided: the knights' actions are always

followed, and if they are identified in their madness, it can cause a disturbance in the social world and would ultimately lead to their defamation. That is why each of them has a feeling of shame right after coming to their senses and being told about their insanity. However, Malory saves his knights: they remain unidentified almost throughout their madness – just like the mad subject the sane identity of which has faded out of the memory of his relations. My thoughts were based on: Angela Gibson, "Malory' Reformulation of Shame" In *Arthuriana*, 11.4 (2001).

[54] Sir Launcelot is now (due to the emotional trauma, and Guenevere's words that tore him away from her) free of his lady's, authorizing gaze, which makes him possible to reflect on himself in a much more independent way.

[55] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 224.

[56] Gibson, "Malory's Reformulation of Shame", 68.

[57] Gibson, "Malory's Reformulation of Shame", 68.

[58] Eugene Vinaver, ed, *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), vol. 3, 1443.

[59] According to Celtic tradition, crossing rivers, lakes and seas can be associated with the crossing of the boundaries of the Otherworld, which can have a result of initiation or getting supernatural power. Sir Tristram's travel to Ireland can be in connection with this concept, since the chapters dealing with his stay tell about his recovering from a mortal wound, finding his lady and becoming (and establishing an identity as) a sterling knight. Proinsias Mac Cana, *Kelta Mitológia* (Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 1993), 125., Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 317-318.

[60] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 317.

[61] As Vinaver points out: "Tristram's first duty is to knighthood, and his fidelity to Isoud only serves as an occasional illustration of his chivalrous conduct." Vinaver, *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, 1447.

[62] Sir Tristram also offends against Malory's conception of "vertuous love," since he did not remain faithful to La Beale Isoud. Cf. Davies, "Malory's »Vertuouse Love«," 462. Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 368-369.

[63] Isoud la Blanche Mains seems to be the Other of La Beale Isoud: a replacement (simulacrum) for the object of desire, the access to which seems to be lost for Sir Tristram when he is exiled from Cornwall. The similar features provide connection between them: both ladies have the same name (however, with different adjectives by which they differ from each other), both of them healed Tristram's mortal, otherwise incurable wounds. Although Isoud la Blanche Mains is present rather as a paper figure (unable to satisfy the absence of La Beale Isoud) without any considerable utterance, La Beale Isoud remains a determining character of the narrative, especially that of Tristram's madness.

[64] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 367-368.

[65] The correspondence may illustrate Gibson's theory on infidelity and shame. A knight "is better off not knowing about his lady's faithlessness because [...] love for a woman can distract from rather than inspire a knight's social loyalties." She also claims that a knight should react on the given situation or "risk what amounts to death". However, Malory, again, saves his knight and reduces the damage of reputation by pushing his hero to madness, a symbolic death, in which he (his identity) disappears from the surrounding people's memory and leaves only dim traces. Gibson, "Malory's Reformulation of Shame", 69.

[66] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 410.

[67] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 412.

[68] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 413.

[69] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 414.

[70] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 414.

[71] Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 11.

[72] Another interesting feature is that although the fight between the two 'fools' takes place just like a knightly combat (e.g. on Tristram's side to protect the herdmen, while on Dagonet's side to avenge the his squires), it lacks an appropriate challenge, and the asking for the knight's name to identify him after the fight. On the one hand, Dagonet's behaviour can be illuminating, since "he does not even *try* to act very much like a knight." (Italics – N. G.) Nagy Gergely,

"A Fool of a Knight, a Knight of a Fool: Malory's Comic Knights," *Arthuriana* 14.4 (2004): 63.

[73] "[B]eware, King Mark, that thou come not about that well in the forest, for there is a fool naked, and that fool and I fool met together, and he had almost slain me." Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 416.

[74] Vinaver, *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, 1472.

[75] According to Benveniste's theory, "subjectivity" itself is an ability of the speaker to assume himself as a "subject". Self-awareness is only possible if the position of the 'I' is evoked by someone opposite to him. Therefore the subject itself is formed during speech, and the identity can give the boundaries among which the subject suit to the role. Benveniste, "Szubjektivitás a nyelvben," 60.

[76] After their recovery, on the one hand, they preserve a somewhat sedimentary residuum of their identity as a knight, which is recalled with the help of the integration of the surrounding subjects. Still, the experiencing is what causes the change and restructuring of the subject, and, in addition, with the recurrence of changing the reader can be a witness not of the repetition of situations, but of the alteration/transformation of characters. My thoughts on the subject of experiencing madness were based on Sutyák's review on Foucault: Sutyák, *Michel Foucault gondolkodása*, 10.

[77] My parallel is based on Nagy Gergely's theory. Nagy, "A Fool of a Knight, a Knight of a Fool: Malory's Comic Knights," 62.

[78] As a parallel to the ruling serious discourse that provides basis for Malory's opinion of knighthood, and to the subversive comic sub-discourse, when appearing together. The description of Dagonet's figure is based upon the tragic representation of madness. These two figures appear to bring some relief to the tragic view and experience of madness, and further enhance the feeling of sublime in those who are watching the mad knights within or outside the text. The public interpretation of madness of the great knights (even if they remain unidentified for the 'social gaze') is basically tragic, and the use of fool characters provides a momentary relief to the audience. Nagy, "A Fool of a Knight, a Knight of a Fool: Malory's Comic Knights," 61-62.

[79] For Dagonet possesses the characteristic features of both sides: he has an identity (and decided to put on the role of a fool), however he is a somewhat deranged element in the Arthurian society. Later with Sir Dinadan's appearance after Sir Tristram's coming to his senses, their adventures will be the continuation of the discrepancy emphasized by Nagy. Nagy, "A Fool of a Knight, a Knight of a Fool: Malory's Comic Knights," 62.

[80] "[S]o he came to an hermitage, and there he laid him down and slept; and in the meanwhile the hermit stole away his sword and, and laid meat down by him. Thus was he kept there ten days; and at the last he departed and came to the herdmen again." Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 417.

[81] As a certain treatment, this expression shows a symbolic identity-constituting action.

[82] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 418-419.

[83] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, 56.

[84] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 215, 219.

[85] When the herdmen ask Tristram to help a knight ("'Help ye him,' said Sir Tristram.") and when he stays away from La Beale Isoud: "'O madam,' Said Sir Tristram, 'go from me, for mickle anger and danger have I escaped for your love." Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, vol. 1, 418, 420.

[86] Benveniste, "Szubjektivitás a nyelvben." 60.

[87] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, 5.

[88] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 418.

[89] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 220.

[90] Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, 34.

[91] According to Schiller, although it belongs to the nature of the sublime object to raise the (uneasy) feeling of our limits, we do not flee from it, but–on the contrary–it attracts our attention with irresistible power.

Friedrich Schiller, "A fenségesről" in *Válogatott esztétikai írásai* (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1960), 92.

[92] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, 220.

[93] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 414.

[94] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 2, 199, 202.

[95] Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, vol. 1, 410-411.

An Elephant in the Room

Fashion theory / Fashion criticism

Éva Zanin

The young representatives of the evolving contemporary Hungarian fashion design around the new millennium are digging their way up at an enormous speed to meet the international standards of the industry. At the time of the fall of the iron curtain Hungarian fashion was not close at all to anything that was happening on the international fashion market. Whereas today, thanks to the innovative design approaches, the positive effects of globalisation and the medial openness of the world wide web, the young Hungarian and international fashion design is being formed along an intercrossable, accessible and therefore similar cultural context.

A good example could be the fortunate success of young Hungarian fashion designers, who are stepping out to the fields of the international fashion business. They are taking advantage of the global intelligence market as, during the years of their professional development, they do not only base their education on the Hungarian educational system, but are keen on studying abroad in prestigious fashion schools so as to meet the standards of contemporary tendencies[1]. Nowadays, the international fashion industry starts to notice Hungary on the map, because, thanks to the developments of the latest years, a number of Hungarian model portfolios have found their way to the most important fashion houses, designers, photographers and magazines.[2]

Despite these undoubtedly positive developments, there is still a massive gap between Hungarian and international fashion processes, the shrinkage of which would be an essential step toward helping the prospering fashion industry reach a professional context that is worth its enthusiasm and creative potential. One of the most important factors of this process, beside the development of education and the re-creation of the conditions for industrial operation, is the establishment of an active critical context that takes the latest international disciplinary achievements in consideration, and contributes to the formation of a theoretical discourse regarding fashion by the means of criticism.

The large majority of the publications regarding Hungarian fashion is satisfied with a simply informative, descriptive form, therefore addressing the fashion consumer readers, telling them about the latest happenings in the fashion world in a rather superficial, often gossipy manner. This practice is extremely problematic for several reasons. Firstly, it presupposes that the fashionistas and fashion industry professionals are not in need of real and serious critical reflection, nor of a discourse that could put the continuously reflected works and their results in a comparative context to enlighten the possible directions of progress, the occasional mistakes and the means, ways and directions of their possible improvement. Secondly, it restricts the press publications about Hungarian fashion, as it banishes them to the pages of glossy women's magazines and women's online sites that are governed by strict marketing regulations, their topics being mostly determined by PR, commercial or barter contracts.

This practice deprives the Hungarian fashion designers of a competent discourse that could thoroughly apprehend their work, and that could consider their efforts and achievements within a professional discourse, that is equivalent to the secondary literature of other artistic forms (such as literature, art, theatre or music). The current advanced state of Hungarian fashion design shows that, after it had successfully recovered from the still waters of the socialist fashion era, the continuously improving and growing fashion industry is surpassing itself day after day. Its economic and industrial potential is as highly important as its creative qualities.

The active presence of criticism could provide a continuous and high quality professional, competent feedback in a comparative context, where the Hungarian achievements could not only be examined in their isolated micro-community, but compared to contemporary designer tendencies within an international register. Therefore, fashion criticism must be capable of reflecting on Hungarian fashion achievements, with the thorough knowledge of the global scene, together with the consideration of the unique Hungarian cultural and historical perspectives. By pointing out the similarities and differences it could show the possible directions of progress, while it could argue about individual achievements as integral parts of an ongoing, active comparative discourse. This

open perspective seems to be the most sufficient in order to put the work of the Hungarian designers in a quality intercultural context that it is entitled to.

Fashion criticism and fashion theory are two indispensable terms for the adaptation of the international fashion critical context that has been in existance since decades, similarly to the theory and the aesthetics of art that cannot escape to deal with the latest concepts of art criticism. The directions and tendencies of the theoretical approach of fashion determine the concepts of fashion criticism. Therefore, due to their interdependent relationship, fashion criticism is in essential need of a theoretical background.

There is no homogeneous theoretical system in which the meaning or definition of fashion could be simply and compoundly described, analyzed or critically explained. There are different fashion theories, since there are different kinds of disciplines that are dealing with the somewhat different concepts of fashion. They all have their own sets of ideas, conceptual frameworks, which are used in different theoretical approaches of fashion in each different institution, subject or theory[3]. Since each discipline does not simply examine, but up to a certain point it also produces its own subject, we must notice the reductive notion of such theories. For example, the approaches of the concept of fashion that are coming from an economic or anthropological perspective, have often proved to be too reductive, since they have created the subject of their interest along their unique scientific characteristics and presuppositions.

In her study Elisabeth Wilson[4] is concerned with the ways in which economic and anthropological theories presuppose the nature of the thing they are to explain. Talking about fashion she draws attention to Baudrillard's concept about the economic account of fashion consumption. She points out that this theory largely depends on the legacy of Marx and Veblen, and uses serious preconceptions about the definition of fashion, that ignores all features of the concept that could knock over the system. Baudrillard uses the veblenian concept of the ugliness of fashion when formulating his critical thoughts about consumer society. He defines fashion as a power of consumer society that can only maintain itself through the radical rejection of beauty[5]. He considers it as a particularly dangerous form of consumerism, because it

„(...) embodies a compromise between the need to innovate and the other need to change nothing in the fundamental order. It is this that characterizes 'modern' societies. Thus it results in a game of change (...) – old and new are not relative to contradictory needs: they are the 'cyclical' paradigm of fashion."[6]

Wilson points out a strange aspect of Baudrillard's theory, where he seemingly rejects Marxism, while he seems to accept this conspiracy motif of the Marxist critiques of capitalism. She also finds it problematic that at this point Baudrillard seems to accept an authentic 'beauty' concept, while at other places he rejects such rationalistic categories, suggesting that desire, which creates 'beauty' at a certain perspective is essentially contradictory and divided, and that artefacts would reflect this ambivalence[7].

Since the different scientific approaches fundamentally form the approaches of the theories and definitions of fashion, the attempts at harmonizing theories and the aim of their reading together could only be possible through an interdisciplinarily open comparative perspective. Of course, at this point one should sum up the most important passages of the evolution of fashion theory, starting from the approaches of the modernist social sciences. But, due to its extensional limits, this paper cannot undertake this immense task[8].

But, undoubtedly there is an urging need to fulfil this need, because it could create a basis for a Hungarian fashion theory discourse. The Hungarian theoretical ground still has only some partial or dissolving fashion theories, that are far away from being in a dialogue with each other. Whereas the international theoretical discourse, especially after the 'cultural turn', is in a very different state[9].

To spot the major differences, it is enough to compare two student reader books on the subject, one of them in Hungarian, the other in English, that were published in the same year.[10]

As the title of Péter Zsolt's book 'Fashion Sociology'[11] (2007) indicates, the Hungarian theoretical discourse links fashion essentially to the social sciences, mostly to sociology and anthropology. Fashion is theorised mostly in connection with the research field of production and consumerism staying on the fields of the Marxist theory of commodity fetishism, and/or its afterlife. The

publication of Péter Zsolt has an indubitable intention of gap filling, as the author tries to offer a philosophical foundation, by establishing some basic statements about the functioning methods of fashion, through the scientific filters of sociological study. The bibliography, the structure and the material of the symptomatic book presents a clear 'diagnosis' of Hungarian fashion theory[12]. It is quite interesting that the bibliography does not contain any explicit references on fashion theory from the post millenium, although a vast amount of publications have appeared around and since 2000, that laid the scientific foundations of the field.

The Fashion Sociology determines its subject arguing that:

> „This book considers not merely the fashion of dress, words, or architecture as the key factors of its examination: it understands fashion in a wider sense as a popular phenomenon that attracts a wider range of the population and whose effects last in medium term periods. Therefore it is interested in questions concerning fashion's influences on human relationships, societies, arts, sciences and inversely: the forms of human relationships, that could be produced by societies."[13]

The rather summed up definition could undoubtedly be justified from the perspective of social sciences, where fashion does not indeed have to be more precisely or analytically explained, since it is nothing more than a social phenomenon influencing all social registers that operate within the perspectives of social research. But–at the same time– we must also see, that this analysis is not *about* fashion *per se*. It is much more of an examination and description of certain changes that are motivated by similar effect-patterns. This means that the research is not concerned about finding out what fashion *is* and *how it works*, but is interested in the things it affects, and the depth, the directions and the characteristics of this impact.

The composition of the book follows the sociological pattern that considers the socially symptomatic systems of most frequently mentioned terms and features relating fashion. Thus, for example, it deals with imitation, the dichotomy between differentiation and assimilation, the spreading methods of fashion values, the links and parallels between ethics, power and ideology, and

the analysis of functions of fashion. One of its most important achievements is that it draws attention to the delicate nuances of the subject, who–in Hungarian theoretical discourse–is usually the signifier of superficiality, understood in an over-simplified pejorative sense. It shows the system of wide-ranging social influence, for which it is compulsory to examine in every single discipline, that tries to understand the events and phenomena of current times. Therefore it is definitely a worthy continuation of the theoretical endeavour of the eighties,that tried to lay the foundations of the conceptual consideration of fashion in Hungarian theoretical discourse[14]. It carries out an important task, when it tries to reveal most perspectives that were potentially influential in the history of thought about fashion, and does this in a clear and easily understandable form. It creates a good basis from where the scientific discourse could move on towards the recognition and the reception of the latest theoretical views.

While the volume by Péter Zsolt only tries to introduce the basic aspects of discourse on fashion in the social sciences, the Routledge Stundent Reader, also published in 2007, invites us to an embarrassing time travel.

The Malcolm Barnard edited *Fashion Theory*[15] manifests itself from the perspectives of the pluralistic scientific context of the recent decades, the emergence of which was actively supported by many theoretical or scientific turns that came about within a short period of time. Such was the 'cultural turn', the sudden advance of the examination of visual culture, the appearance and the establishment of university departments for cultural criticism from departments of literary theory, history and comparative literature and the growing importance of research in popular culture within the human departments.

In the series editor's preface Chris Jenks points out:

> „[Thus], even though the term *fashion* has come to be regarded as a particular hyperbole of contemporary Western capitalism its broader remit can be applied to all demonstrations of either collective or individual identification and differentiation. Fashion is, of course, a modern industry but that huge enterprise itself is, in turn, merely one more realisation and formalisation of humankind's infinite range of capacities to adorn, to decorate, to present, to membership, to belong, to eroticize, to both artfully stabilize and de-stabilize. We can begin to

regard fashion as not merely the prerogative of celebrity and footballer's wives but as an expressive playground for creative social practice."[16]

When discussing fashion theory, Malcolm Barnard refers to those complex sets of ideas that lay behind our thoughts, statements and decisions concerning the items of clothing that we wear. He tries to define the word *fashion* in his introduction, before explaining what *theory* is, and after this, he tries to give the meaning of the phrase *fashion theory*, that is also the subject of this collection of essays.

His approaches of defining what fashion is, come from various angles. He compares the common, everyday use of the word to the diversity of the meanings listed in the dictionary, and to those definitive approaches, that arose from different scientific fields that tried to explain fashion as part of their own specific theoretical field. Thus, for example, he stresses the differences between the meanings of the English word 'fashion' as a verb and as a noun[17]. He furthermore stresses, that the word is often used as a synonym for 'clothing', or 'style' but the 'consumer goods in the latest mode' could also be listed here. Polhemus and Procter[18] are adding the phrase 'adornment' to the list, that subjects the meaning of fashion to another turn. As Joan Entwistle puts it, the conceptual relationship between 'fashion' and 'adornment' has an anthropological background, that came in use because anthropology needed an

„(...) all-inclusive term that denotes all the things that people do to their bodies."[19]

According to another approach, due to the confusion of 'fashion' as a verb and as a noun, fashion is often understood as 'being in fashion'. Although, in this diversity of meanings, none of them offers a reliable and complex closure to the debate of defining fashion, they are still able to support the process of conceptualizing. That is to say, Barnard understands that the term 'fashion' slips out from the influence of any concluding or complex definition the way that it still lets us gain an understanding about it. But this concept could never become static or closable but stays in constant movement.

After the introduction, twelve parts of the book typologise the basic aspects of the theoretical approaches to fashion in the past decades. Barnard adds a small introduction to each part, in which he sums up the key points of the cited papers and puts them into context. Nearly all of the chosen texts are composed from some sort of a critical perspective. Since their aim is to cross the borders of their context and critically question a seemingly clear concept, they do not support a homogenizing interpretation of fashion.[20]

For example, instead of creating a simple shortcut between the theory and its subject, the two papers of the first part *Fashion and fashion theories* raise a large number of questions that encourage further critical thinking. The reader book does not aim to give a homogeneous disciplinary framework to fashion theory, nor to provide it with an academically established scientific basis. It is much more keen on showing to what degree was the subject–problematised in so many fields so far, including social sciences, art history, aesthetics, philosophy, economy and even literary theory–deformed by the established methods, regulations and strict rules of reading of those certain fields of study. It is also interested in finding out about the extent of dialogicity between these scientific fields, when talking about fashion. This part contains the already cited paper by Elisabeth Wilson, in which she demonstrates the reductive nature of the economic and anthropological interpretations of fashion. The other paper in this chapter is a part of a study by Gilles Lipovetsky[21], who engages in the debate from a philosophical angle, and whose text could be read as a critique of Wilson's paper. Barnard intentionally tries to sketch an interdisciplinary context, since it is the one that could somehow escape the accusation of a reductionist reading.

The book of Péter Zsolt on the other hand, depicts fashion from a scientific viewpoint, where it seems to be the monolithic and clearly definable spectacle of sociology and nothing else. In other words, his examination deals with fashion as something (some event or phenomenon) that *exists* from a certain historical date (14th century), and *affects* the formation of Western societies. In the same time it does not raise any questions about the different readings and the complicated understanding of the relationship between *fashion* and *history*, since these approaches could lead towards a phenomenological meta-reading, and could easily direct the logic of the book towards problems that could

fundamentally question the merely sociological or anthropological approach to fashion. But it is obvious, of course, that, in this current rudimentary state of Hungarian fashion-research in 2007 the time has not yet come for a study raising such complicated questions. We, however, sincerely hope that this is going to change in 2009.

There are many reasons, why Hungarian theoretical thinking must take fashion in consideration. On the one hand, there is the quick progress of the creative register, that was already mentioned above, and–on the other–the urging need of thinking together with the international tendencies. English academic circles began to be interested in the research of fashion history at an academic level in the sixties. They have realised about five decades ago, that the research of fashion history does not mean the ignorance, nor the damage of high culture. Thanks to the emergence of postmodern theories, the theoretical disciplines have changed their points of view about the interpretation of social issues, which has led to the birth of cultural studies, whose findings were quickly embraced by Comparative Literature Departments. Today's global tendencies show, that Comparative Literature Departments have transformed into Departments of Literary and Cultural Criticism. Why is that? Because similarly to the research of literature, the examination of culture could only be carried out through the reading of language and interpretation of texts. And this scholarly practice possesses the comparative interdisciplinary and critical perspective, from where it does not refer to itself as a discipline and its subject as some monolithic, homogeneous whole, but rather constantly questions the possibility of their static maintenance. Since comparative literature is, first of all, the ground of crisis, it could permanently be open towards new critical approaches and doubtful concern about its own discipline[22].

The most widely accepted opinion in Hungary still is that sociology is the discipline that is 'in charge' of dealing with the subject of fashion. But this point of view must be seriously reconsidered in reflections of the theoretical changes of the past couple of decades. Thanks to the emergence of the cultural turn, literary theory has embraced theories about body, gender or feminism that were previously only examined by social sciences. And what else could demonstrate the urging need of the Hungarian close up in terms of adapting fashion theory and fashion criticism than the fact that a large number of

Hungarian theoretical schools have started cultural and cultural criticism studies along with examinations of the theoretical inter-relations between contemporary culture and media.[23]

The author is the holder of the Ernő Kállai Scholarship for art writers and art historians, awarded by the Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture

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[1] Such a designer is Szandra Sándor, the owner of the label Nanushka, who received her degree in the London College of Fashion, and is currently running a successful fashion label, that is marketed in all major European fashion capitals as well as in cities of US and Japan. Another great example could be the USE Unused label, that has an equally professional and serious international business reputation and is a regular exhibitor of the Paris Fashion Week. Dóra Szilágyi, the graduate of the KREA Art School could also be part of the list. After finishing her professional education in Hungary, she got another degree in menswear design at the Royal College of Art, and is now one of the leading designers of Jean Paul Gaultier's Jeans line in Florance.

[2] The most famous Hungarian models of the emerging young generation are Enikő Mihalik, Kinga Rajzak, Sophie Srej and Adina Forizs.

[3] Malcolm Barnard: Introduction, (1-14.) In: Malcolm Barnard ed.: *Fashion Theory. A Reader*. Routledge Student Readers, London and New York 2007. (7.)

[4] Elisabeth Wilson: *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, Virago Press London 1985. (53.)

[5] Jean Baudrillard: *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, Transl. by Charles Levin, Telos Press New York 1981 (79.)

[6] ibid. (51.)

[7] Wilson, 1985. (53-54.)

[8] On the other hand, I am dealing with the subject in a prominent part of my PhD dissertation, since it is a particularly important aspect of my work, and will therefore be thoroughly overviewed at that point.

[9] For the international background of the cultural turn and its Hungarian reception see Sándor Hornyik: *Kulturális fordulat(ok) az irodalomtudományban és művészettörténetben (Az Intézményesség és kulturális közvetítés című kötet kapcsán) [Cultural Turn(s) in Literary Theory and Art History. (Thoughts in connection with the volume ' Institution and Cultural Mediation')]* http://balkon.c3.hu/2006/2006_2/03hornyik.html Accessed: october 2008.

[10] Since I am basing my argument on the comparison of two student reader volumes, hereby I shall not mention, nor compare all the fashion history books, articles, studies and other texts that have been published on the subject on Hungarian. Nevertheless, it is important to list some of the outstanding works, such as G. Klaniczay G. and K. S. Nagy (ed.): *Divatszociológia I-II.[Fashion Sociology I-II.]*, Tömegkommunikációs Kutatóközpont Budapest 1982.; G. Klaniczay: *Ellenkultúra a hetvenes nyolcvanas években [Counter Culture in the seventies and eighties]*, Noran Kiadó Budapest 2003.

[11] Péter Zsolt: Divatszociológia [Fashion Sociology], Pro Toto Kiadó Budapest 2007.

[12] It is an interesting contribution to the fact of the absence of fashion theory in Hungarian language, that the word 'divatelmélet' (that is 'fashion theory' in Hungarian) typed into Google search, finds only 19 references and none of them are directly or explicitly relevant. (Latest date of checking: 25.09.2008. É.Z.)

[13] (10.) Zsolt, 2007.

[14] Example: G. Klaniczay G. and K. S. Nagy (ed.): *Divatszociológia I-II. [Fashion Sociology I-II.]*, Tömegkommunikációs Kutatóközpont Budapest 1982.

[15] Malcolm Barnard (ed.): *Fashion Theory. A Reader.* Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, London – New York 2007.

[16] (xi) Barnard, 2007.

[17] The Hungarian word 'divat' does not share this dualism, since it is mainly used only as a noun. Only the more ancient word 'mód, módi' points to an early understanding of the word as an adjective, refering to 'a way of doing or posing sg'.

[18] T. Polhemus and L. Procter: *Fashion and Anti-Fashion: An Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*, London, Thames and Hudson Press 1978.

[19] Joan Entwistle: The Fashioned Body, Cambridge, Polity Press 2000. (40.)

[20] It is important to note the difference between the two books, since the Routledge Student Reader is a collection of essays, while Péter Zsolt's publication is his own essay. Their comparison is therefore only relevant due to the same year of publication and the similarity of their subjects and targeted readers.

[21] Gilles Lipovetsky: „The Empire of Fashion: Introduction" In: (25-32.) Barnard, 2007. (original publication: Gilles Lipovetsky: *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*, Princeton University Press 1994.)

[22] For more on this subject see Jonathan Culler: Whither Comparative Literature? In: Comparative Critical Studies 3, 1-2, (85-97.) 2006.

[23] Such Hungarian university departments are for example: the Department of American Studies, the Department of Communication and Media Studies and the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Szeged, the Department of English Literatures and Cultures and the Seminar of Cinematographical Science and Visual Culture at the University of Pécs, the Department of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.

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